

CREATION, JUSTIFICATION, RESURRECTION:

AN EXPOSITION AND CRITIQUE

OF KÄSEMANN'S ROMANS

BY

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Abstract of Thesis

Ernst Käsemann's *Commentary on Romans* has been highly acclaimed for its contribution to the study of the New Testament. At the same time, it has been acknowledged that it is a highly complex work, difficult to understand. The purpose of this dissertation is to isolate one of the major distinctive new ideas in the commentary and to argue that this distinctive new idea is a particularly valuable contribution.

Contrary to much current opinion, Käsemann asserts that the epistle is an inwardly coherent unity, in which all Paul's theological concepts are subordinate to a central theme, which also determines his ideas about the everyday life appropriate to believers. This theme, which Käsemann believes to be Paul's own sharpening of the primitive gospel, is the righteousness of God as justification of the ungodly by faith. Complementing this claim is Käsemann's observation that the three statements in Rom 4, describing God as him who justifies the ungodly (4:5), raises the dead (4:17), and brings into existence that which does not exist (4:17), are parallel or equivalent statements, central to the whole epistle.

It is contended that the recognition of this particular linking of ideas is Käsemann's most distinctive contribution to the study of Romans. It is this which gives strength to his argument for the centrality of justification, raising it above the usual criticisms of this interpretation of Pauline theology.

This thesis demonstrates that the three themes from Rom 4 are indeed central and equivalent, and that Käsemann is correct in claiming this, and hence in his conviction that the righteousness of God as justification of the ungodly by faith is central. By focussing on the three themes, and largely ignoring all else, we isolate a key to understanding Käsemann's commentary, in that we highlight a framework from which to make sense of the many details and seemingly unfounded assertions.

Our method is to study each of the three themes in turn, taking account both of their pre-Pauline usage, and of the role each plays in Paul's argument in Romans. In the course of this, speculation concerning the historical situation is made. On the basis of this speculation, criticism is made of Käsemann's historical reconstruction, and so of his interpretation of Paul's argument. We argue that Paul is not simply setting out his teaching, but is addressing the particular problem of the place of Judaism in view of the inclusion of Gentiles within the 'people of God'. The main feature of the debate is the Jews' concern that the inclusion of the Gentiles calls into question the faithfulness of God. Käsemann, on the other hand, stresses that Paul is attacking the Jewish law and the piety of the Jews.

Preamble

Writing in the late 17th century, John Locke observed that,

The bulk of Mankind have not the leisure for Learning and Logick, and superfine distinctions of the Schools. Where the hand is used to the Plough, and the Spade, the head is seldom elevated to sublime Notions, or exercised in mysterious reasonings. 'Tis well if Men of that rank (to say nothing of the other Sex) can comprehend plain propositions, and a short reasoning about things familiar to their Minds, and nearly allied to their daily experience. Go beyond this, and you amaze the greatest part of Mankind: And may as well talk *Arabick* to a poor day labourer, as the Notions and Language that the Books and Disputes of Religion are filled with, and as soon you will be understood.¹

In this century, the difficulty of understanding many scholarly religious books, is not confined to the laity. Many students, ministers and academics are also daunted by certain works, and find it difficult to discern and assess the real message and value of some books, though they do not necessarily admit it. It can even be the case that the more difficult a book is to understand, the more highly praised it tends to be. It is our suspicion that this, to a certain extent, applies to the writings of Ernst Käsemann. Above all, it seems it could well be so of his commentary on Romans, the complexity, detail, and sheer size of the work being a temptation to more or less superficial description and evaluation.

That Käsemann has made an indelible mark on this century's New Testament scholarship, especially in Pauline research, is indisputable. His commentary is the culmination of his life's work on Paul. On its publication in English translation, it was described as "one of the great commentaries"². Its original appearance in German was acclaimed as "an important event in the history of modern NT research"³, "one of the most significant New Testament commentaries of this century"⁴, which "has decisively advanced the understanding of Romans and can be most warmly commended to careful study."⁵ It is further described as a "remarkable synthesis of Käsemann's understanding of Romans"⁶, which cannot be disregarded, whether one agrees with it or not.

In conclusion, we argue that, in view of the three parallel designations of God, Käsemann is right that justification is central, but, that his use of the doctrine is unacceptable in view of modern research into Judaism. It is shown that Käsemann's claim for the centrality of justification withstands the attacks of critics, here represented by Stendahl and Sanders, but that their arguments concerning the misrepresentation of Judaism are valid. Nevertheless, to reject the centrality of justification on these grounds is mistaken. Rightly understood, Paul's doctrine of justification can be seen as an affirmation of Judaism, rather than as a misguided rejection of it.

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Above all I have been sustained throughout my period of study by many friends, too many to mention. Nonetheless, I would not wish to neglect to single out the particular interest and encouragement of my family, members of Burwood Uniting Church, the Potter family, and most special friends, Kirsten, Alan and Calum and their Mum and Dad. Thank you.

However much the reader may disagree with the details, and even if he rejects the thesis as a whole . . . no-one can come to the end of it without having had his understanding of the epistle broadened and deepened.⁷

Perhaps the most enthusiastic review comes from Osborn, who praises it for the "range and depth of comprehension" maintained throughout.

It offers an understanding of Paul which will blow most conventional categories apart. If Käsemann's commentary is read and understood, it will do more for biblical understanding than Bultmann's commentary on John and I cannot think of another commentary in this century to stand beside those two. For the value of this commentary goes beyond the letter to the Romans. It offers an extended example of historical-critical method. . . . in the end its method will do as much for the perceptive reader as its contents, and that is to say a great deal.⁸

Such bold claims would seem to call for detailed evaluation of the commentary. This task, however, would be far beyond the scope of this study. We propose, therefore, to isolate and investigate what we consider to be the most distinctive contribution of Käsemann's work, whilst largely ignoring much of the scholarly detail which, while certainly of the highest standard, is, in our view, secondary to what is unique in his exposition.

Our purpose in this undertaking is largely practical. So important a scholar as Käsemann ought not to be ignored by anyone interested in serious study of the New Testament. Both his approach and his conclusions show remarkable, refreshing and challenging insight. If it is true, as we contend it is, that his commentary is as significant and new in its contribution to the study of Romans as the above-mentioned reviews maintain, then it ought to be regarded as essential reading, not only for academic scholars, but also for students and ministers⁹, in their attempts, for the purposes of practical ministry, to come to grips with the gospel as Paul presents it. There are, however, a number of factors which seriously limit the accessibility of this work to the average student or minister, particularly in the English-speaking world.¹⁰ It is especially with this in view,

and not necessarily as fair comment on Käsemann's work, that the following observations are made, though it is notable that most of the scholarly reviews also raise a number of these objections.

A major difficulty in reading the commentary is Käsemann's compressed literary style. Whilst a degree of conciseness is to be welcomed, the compact presentation of complex ideas demands much re-reading¹¹, and still at times remains obscure, even when a reader has previous knowledge of Käsemann's basic ideas and themes. At the same time the sentences are long and complicated, as are the paragraphs. The English translation is broken into smaller paragraphs, but the translation itself is not altogether satisfactory, lacking life, and at times clarity, tending in part to follow a German style of language and construction which makes reading difficult.¹² A further hindrance to reading is the inclusion of footnote material in parentheses within the text. In our view these factors detract from what Käsemann has to say, and discourage all but the very determined reader.

A further obstacle to ready understanding of Käsemann's interpretation of Romans is the lack of any introduction. He provides no easily assimilated picture of his thoughts about historical questions, in particular, the occasion and purpose of the letter and the composition of the recipient congregation. The only help to the reader looking for some overall framework within which to approach the detailed exposition is the contents page. This, at least, does give an extensive outline of Käsemann's understanding of the theological content and argument of the letter. The absence of a verse by verse layout, and of an index, on the other hand, inhibits consultation on particular points.

A major feature of the commentary is the considerable detail, and complex discussion of every issue. Frequent reference is made to the extensive literature of the last 50 years, and to ongoing debates over both major and minor points¹³. Whilst this must be a significant factor in the high commendation of the commentary, again it seems to us that this tends to detract from one's grasp of what Käsemann wants to convey, especially when the details of the debate in question are not familiar to the reader¹⁴. The central themes, major concepts, and intended systematic clarity and developing argument, tend to be interrupted,

clouded or swamped by the endless detail. Although, with his concise style, Käsemann can hardly be accused of verbosity, in other respects Calvin's description of Bucer's commentary on Romans could well apply here:

Bucer is too verbose to be read quickly by those who have other matters to deal with, and too profound to be easily understood by less intelligent and attentive readers. Whatever the subject with which he is dealing, so many subjects are suggested to him by his incredible and vigorous fertility of mind, that he does not know how to stop writing.¹⁵

At the same time, there are many places throughout, where Käsemann seems simply to make assertions, which often appear as catchphrases or recurring themes, without explaining the connections he sees. These frequently seem to be obscure, perhaps being predetermined inter-relationships established by arguments elsewhere, so that Käsemann does not see the need to justify their introduction at the point in question. Such statements could be said to have something in common with Milligan's poem¹⁶,

String

String
Is a very important thing.
Rope is thicker,
But string,
Is quicker.

P.S. The meaning of this is obscure
That's why, the higher the fewer.

It sounds profound, and rings true. But what prompted him to say it at this point? What is he actually telling us?

It is, of course, unreasonable to suggest that these features of themselves are necessarily illegitimate, especially in such a major work, written as the culmination of a life-long study of the epistle. In fact it is Käsemann's stated intention that the

reader should work through the whole commentary, following the developing argument, assessing the details against the broader systematic framework, and not simply seeking easy answers to specific problems¹⁷. Rather, as Moule observes, "from continuous reading there gradually emerge the contours of a penetrating and passionately defended interpretation of the apostle's position."¹⁸

Whilst it is not disputed that Käsemann is entitled to take this approach, it does seem a pity that so highly commended a contribution should be presented in such a way that, because of the obstructions to straight-forward reading and understanding indicated above, it could remain virtually inaccessible to a reader wishing to use the commentary for reference, rather than to study the whole work in detail, for its own sake. It is our belief that reading, understanding and assessment could be significantly aided if the fundamental features of Käsemann's analysis could be isolated in some way, and its validity tested, as far as possible avoiding both mere assertions and excursions into too much detail. Thus it is our intention to undertake such an exercise¹⁹.

Needless to say, the resultant study cannot claim to be purely objective, involving as it will, our own evaluation of what it is in Käsemann's study that is particularly significant, our understanding of that and of the Pauline text, all of which are bound to be influenced by our own presuppositions. Nor do we seek to suggest that either Käsemann's, or our own interpretation, provides the definitive analysis of Romans. We aim, instead, simply to inquire whether and if so to what extent we find Käsemann's interpretation to be upheld by the text, and so to offer what seems to be a feasible understanding of Paul's argument and theology, acknowledging, with Käsemann, that academic conclusions are of real value only when they invite challenge, and so facilitate deeper exploration.²⁰

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Abbreviations

- Cross* Cross, F.L. (ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., revised by F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, (reprinted with corrections), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- ENTT* Käsemann, E., *Essays on New Testament Themes*, trans. by W.J. Montague, London: SCM Press, 1964.
- ET* English Translation
- EVB 1 & 2* Käsemann, E., *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen*, 2 vols. in one, vol 1, 6th ed., vol. 2, 2nd ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970.
- Käsemann* Käsemann, E., *An die Römer*, 4th revised ed., Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1980; ET: *Commentary on Romans*, trans. by G.W. Bromiley, London: SCM Press, 1980.
- KK* Käsemann, E., *Kirchliche Konflikte*, vol. 1, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982.
- NTQT* *New Testament Questions of Today*, trans. by W.J. Montague, London: SCM Press, 1969.
- PP* Käsemann, E., *Paulinische Perspektiven*, 2nd revised ed., Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1972; ET: *Perspectives on Paul*, trans. by M. Kohl, London: SCM Press, 1971.
- TDNT* *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, trans. and ed. by G.W. Bromiley, 9 vols., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-74.

Introduction

Käsemann has said, "In theology the important things are . . . concentration on the essentials and a combination of consistency and flexibility in their application."¹ These features, he maintains, are seen in Pauline theology. It is herein that Paul's greatness lies. While he does present ideas unknown elsewhere, his frequent use of motifs known in other, earlier traditions, means that, because of lack of written evidence from much of his environment, points at which Paul appears to be original cannot conclusively be attributed to his mind alone. Rather, says Käsemann,

The apostle's originality . . . may be seen generally in the clarity and depth with which he is able to subordinate all these things to his chief concerns, determining the Christian way of life also from that self-same centre.²

It is predominantly this perception of Paul that attracts us to Käsemann, both because it promises a key to understanding all that Paul says, once the meaning of his chief concerns is unravelled, and because it should provide a model for contemporary preaching of the gospel. It is, however, the former of these two potential results that is the primary subject of this study. An additional attraction is that, because he sees Paul's value in this way, Käsemann himself concentrates "on what Paul meant theologically"³, endeavouring to explore the point Paul is making, to connect it with his central theology, and, where appropriate, to apply it to present day Christianity, rather than limiting himself to little more than an extended paraphrase, as is the case in many commentaries.

A number of current Pauline scholars do not accept that one *can* isolate a central theology in Paul, and propose rather, that Paul's epistles are too particular and fragmentary for any one concept to be especially emphasized. Käsemann acknowledges this when he says, "Contrary to the present trend, I should like to maintain the provocative thesis that . . . the apostle undoubtedly [is] upheld in his whole work by a central message"⁴. Further, while many scholars do agree that it is possible to speak of a centre to Paul's theology, there is a considerable diversity of views as to just what that centre is. Certainly there has long been

opposition to the previously widely held belief that the doctrine of justification fills this position. Thus it is remarkable that Käsemann so firmly asserts this belief. It is important, however, to be aware of Käsemann's particular wording of the doctrine, since that itself is distinctive:

the Pauline formula of the justification of the ungodly in Romans 4:5 . . . although it is only to be found once in such brevity, reflects the apostle's theology as a whole and must on no account be relativised.⁵

The notion that, far from being central, the doctrine of justification is, as Schweitzer so forcefully put it, merely "a subsidiary crater which has formed within the rim of the main crater"⁶, has appeared at regular intervals, its most recent supporters being represented by Sanders and Stendahl.

Both of these scholars take it that those who regard justification by faith as central understand it to mean forgiveness of sin and ongoing freedom from sin's power, a freedom not available under the law. In brief, Stendahl⁷ argues that the doctrine of justification is specifically related to the problem of the relation between Jews and Gentiles. It tends to be given undue prominence because it is read as an answer to the question of how one is to be saved, as the solution to the human predicament. This, though, is an entirely inappropriate generalization of a particular argument, which distorts Paul's meaning and obscures much of the richness and variety in Paul's thought. Sanders' position is rather more complex because his argument is shaped to a particular structure, for the purposes of comparison of Paul's religion with Judaism as a religion.⁸ According to this structure, the point of entry into the religion is what determines what is central. Thus, in Paul's case, Sanders argues, what is primary, and so central to his theology, is to be found in his conviction that Jesus Christ is Lord, in whom salvation is made available for all who believe, and that he, Paul, was called to be apostle to the Gentiles. In other words, contrary to most interpretations, it is to be recognized that Paul starts with the solution to man's plight, and from thence works out what the plight is, what makes this salvation necessary. Such evidence as we have indicates that Paul's missionary preaching was about Christ, and the salvation through participatory union with him, faith being the means of participation rather than the content of the preaching, and justification being

only one of a number of ways of expressing what constitutes this salvation that results from being in Christ. This means that in Romans, where the theme is the righteousness of faith, Paul was not presenting his central, fundamental theology. Consequently it is clear that righteousness by faith cannot be regarded as the centre of Paul's theology, being both derived and concerned with only one particular expression of the plight of man, and his salvation from it.

Those who hold these sorts of views tend to reject Käsemann's interpretation as being typically Lutheran, assuming that, since Luther was demonstrably mistaken in his interpretation, so must Käsemann be.

Käsemann asserts his position so strongly and confidently, despite these determinedly argued contradictory opinions, that his claim for the centrality of justification in Paul's theology demands investigation and evaluation. This study is no more than an attempt to begin this task, by seeing whether it is possible to regard the formula of the justification of the ungodly as the centre of Paul's theology as we find it in his epistle to the Romans. This epistle is chosen because it seems to be the one around which the controversy revolves, and because Käsemann's most extensive work is his commentary on Romans. Thus the investigation is limited in that it does not attempt to address itself to Paul's theology as a whole, and is also confined to an epistle where justification is quite specifically discussed. Nor is it proposed that alternative views of what might be the centre of Pauline theology be discussed at length. The present aim is simply to investigate the feasibility of regarding this particular formula as the central theme of Romans.

In the Preamble, we pointed out that it is generally considered by reviewers that Käsemann's commentary constitutes a significant contribution which advances the understanding of the epistle. This in itself would suggest that what is presented there is not just a repeat of the Lutheran interpretation, but something quite new. As we have said, a full investigation of the bold claims made concerning this work, is beyond the scope of this thesis, just as is an assessment of Käsemann's claims for Paul's theology as a whole. Rather, we restrict ourselves to what we consider to be its most distinctive contribution. In so doing, we largely ignore much of the valuable exegetical detail, as well as Käsemann's other writings on Paul, believing, as we have indicated, that Käsemann's partic-

ular brilliance lies more in the broader, overall approach and interpretation.

Although many of the individual elements in Käsemann are not unique to him, we are of the opinion that the particular elements he does include, and especially the way he brings them together, according to his understanding of the task of theology, quoted in the opening sentence above, do make his commentary stand head and shoulders above most, if not all, others. Some indication of Käsemann's distinctive approach, and aids to understanding his work, are to be found in his own personal history. Chapter 1, therefore, begins with some biographical notes and an outline of what Käsemann considers to be important in New Testament research. Following this, the main features of his interpretation of Romans are indicated. To provide some focus for our evaluation, Chapter 1 will then proceed with a summary of the view that justification is peripheral, as it is argued by Stendahl and Sanders. The Chapter will be concluded with a discussion of our approach to the evaluation of Käsemann's commentary.

In outlining Käsemann's particular contribution, our argument is:

1. Käsemann claims

- (a) that the doctrine of justification is Paul's distinctive expression of the gospel of the resurrection of Jesus, and
- (b) that the gospel manifestation of the righteousness of God shows it to be both gift and power.

2. This

- (a) distinguishes Käsemann's commentary from previous interpretations, and
- (b) raises his work above the usual criticism of theories that put justification at the centre.

In his interpretation Käsemann puts particular emphasis on the three designations of God that occur in Rom 4: the God who justifies the ungodly, who raises the dead, and who brings into existence that which does not exist. These he

regards as parallel or equivalent statements. It is our contention that it is this particular linking of ideas that is the strength behind Käsemann's assertion regarding the central theme of Pauline theology. We propose, therefore, to study each of these designations of God in turn, in greater detail than was possible for Käsemann to include in his commentary, and to show that they each play a central role, to which all other themes are subordinate (but logically connected), in Paul's argument in Romans. By thus highlighting these themes alone, we hope to demonstrate the value of this particular insight which, as we suggested in the Preamble, seems to get lost in the mass of detail in the commentary and, because of this, tends to appear as unexplained assertion rather than clearly demonstrated centrality.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4, consequently, are each devoted to one of these designations of God. In brief, our method is to begin by presenting some examples of the occurrence of each theme, or approximations to them, from the Old Testament and other Jewish literature, in order to have some picture of the sorts of ideas that may have been familiar to Paul. We shall then work through the text of Romans, highlighting those parts of the argument that make direct reference to the theme in question, and the relation of other passages to those parts, or to the theme itself. If it is true that there is the kind of unity in Paul's thought that Käsemann claims, it should be possible to show that any passage, in which Paul appears to talk about many things, can be seen to relate directly, or more or less directly, to the central theological theme. Our aim is to make it clear that this is indeed so. In summary, our approach is aimed at proving Käsemann right, not so much by means of debate, as by demonstration. The product of such a method will, therefore, be a combination of Paul's argument, Käsemann's central ideas, and our own reconstruction or interpretation of Paul's argument, as we see it working itself out in relation to Käsemann's themes.

In the course of these three studies, we will also show that we disagree with Käsemann on a number of points. In particular, we differ in our perception of Paul's purpose and the situation in Rome. This means that, whilst we argue that Käsemann is right about Paul's theology, we do not accept his view of the overall subject of the letter, i.e., of what Paul is arguing on the basis of his theology. Especially, we reject his picture of Judaism, and hence of what

Paul is wanting to communicate about or to the Jews. Because of this, we also find we cannot uphold his application of the argument, which he presents predominantly as a condemnation of piety, based on the claim that the Jew in Romans is the type of religious humanity in general. Whilst we share Käsemann's reservations about piety, and can see how Paul's ideas may be so applied, we hope to demonstrate that Paul simply uses this picture to explain his basic affirmation of God's faithfulness to the people of Israel, despite, or even perhaps through, the inclusion of the Gentiles.

Having discussed the three themes separately, we aim in the conclusion, Chapter 5, to draw together what we have found, namely, that Käsemann is both correct and enlightening in asserting that, "creation, resurrection, and justification declare in fact one and the same divine action"⁹ and as such constitute the centre of Pauline theology. We shall then argue that, while disagreeing with his presentation of the Jews as believing justification is by works, we affirm his claim that the proclamation of righteousness by faith is a sharpening of the pre-Pauline christological gospel, so that the two are linked, as he says, in such a way that, "The doctrine of justification is the specifically Pauline understanding of christology just as the latter is the basis of the former."¹⁰ It is this christological basis, demonstrated by the parallelism of creation, justification and resurrection, and not the role of faith, that makes Paul's doctrine of justification different from otherwise similar views held within Judaism, especially within the Qumran community.

It is this, then, that will enable us to argue that Käsemann's approach to the doctrine gives it a depth and breadth which frees it from the sort of criticism directed against it by Stendahl and Sanders. We aim to demonstrate that Käsemann uses the doctrine in a way that is rightly criticized by these scholars, but that this misuse does not warrant rejection of the doctrine itself, or of its centrality. Rightly understood, Paul's doctrine of the justification of the ungodly can be seen as affirmation of the fundamentals of Judaism, rather than misguided rejection of them. To claim that justification is not central because Käsemann, as others, treats it as the answer to the plight of mankind in general, thereby misunderstanding the particularity of the debate in which it arises, will be shown to be equally misrepresentative of Paul. To claim that justification is not central be-

cause it can be shown that Käsemann's presentation of Paul's view of Judaism, especially with regard to the law, is incompatible with the findings of research into Judaism, will also be shown to be inadequate, since such a claim is based on the assumption that Käsemann reliably reconstructs Paul's meaning—a point which we dispute. In our view, to reject the centrality of the justification of the ungodly in Paul's theology, because of weaknesses in Käsemann's argument or interpretation, is to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

In summary of the foregoing, we conclude this introduction with an outline of the thesis we now proceed to defend.

Thesis Outline

It is contended that:

1. The distinctive contribution of Käsemann in his *Commentary on Romans* lies in his asserting the equivalence, and centrality in Paul's theology, of the three statements, that God is 'he who justifies the ungodly' (4:5), 'who gives life to the dead' (4:17), and who 'calls into existence the things that do not exist' (4:17).
2. Käsemann is correct in his assertions that,
 - (a) The statements are equivalent in that they are parallel definitions of God concurrently revealed in single events within salvation history.
 - (b) The statements are central in that all other theological themes in the epistle are subordinate statements specifically related to these three equivalent themes.
 - (c) Consequently, Paul's epistle to the Romans has an inner unity and logical coherence which can be clearly demonstrated.
3. Käsemann's insight into Paul's theology is to be affirmed independently of his reconstruction of the historical situation he supposes Paul to be addressing.

Chapter 1

Käsemann's Life and Work

1.1 Käsemann's Life and Outlook

Just as the historical critics believe an awareness of Paul's background and situation significantly enhances the chances of coming to some understanding of Paul's interpretation of the gospel, and his theological position, as contained in his epistles, so it is reasonable to expect that some background knowledge of Käsemann may, directly or indirectly, provide some illumination for our task of trying to understand Käsemann's interpretation of Paul, as it is presented in his commentary on Romans.

Käsemann was born in Westphalia, in north-western Germany, in 1906. His theological study, at the universities of Bonn, Marburg and Tübingen, was therefore conducted at a time when the dialectical theology¹ introduced by Barth had largely revolutionized the approach of younger German theologians, whether or not they were in full agreement with Barth himself. Käsemann speaks of Bultmann as his particular teacher², although it was his earliest lectures on Romans, presented by the Roman Catholic scholar, Erik Peterson, that set him on the course of his life-long, primary area of research, namely, Pauline theology, particularly as presented in Romans³. His first major work, with which he completed his post-graduate study, was an investigation of Pauline anthropology and ecclesiology as conveyed by the term 'the body of Christ'. This was published in 1933.⁴ His commentary on Romans, published at the end of his formal career, is by far his most extensive and exhaustive study. In fact he goes so far as to say of

Romans, "No literary document has been more important for me"⁵. Apart from his teachers, he points to the writings of Luther, Calvin, Barth, Schlatter and, especially, Baur, as having had a particular influence on his thinking.⁶

It was in 1933, the year Hitler was elected to power, that Käsemann began parish ministry in Westphalia. The political situation posed serious questions which, perhaps in contrast to those discussed within academia, demanded definite and immediate life-determining decisions. It was this context that lent passion to his dialectical theology. "Dialectical theology made possible a blunt antithesis of evangelical faith over against fascist ideology"⁷ and the liberal view of history on which it rested. Käsemann was convinced that answers to the questions posed by the current events of that time were to be found in the New Testament⁸. This meant that his subsequent study was entirely determined by his search for solutions to problems of every-day life. Thus he says, "The only problems which I have felt as a challenge, have been those which affected me personally and which had a direct bearing on the ministerial life within the church."⁹ Joining the struggle to overthrow liberalism through dialectical theology constituted a major part of his early efforts to challenge the status quo.¹⁰

Käsemann is an outspoken person, not afraid to speak his mind, even though this attitude has cost him valued friendships¹¹. "Scientists don't consider whether their conclusions will offend. They state, as strongly as they can, what the evidence supports."¹² Presumably this approach, along with his active membership of the Confessing Church from its beginning,¹³ contributed to his being imprisoned for 3 months during 1938, under Hitler's regime.

During this time he wrote *Das wandernde Gottesvolk*¹⁴, an exposition of the epistle to the Hebrews, which proposed a doctrine of the church and "the authentic definition of Christendom for the future"¹⁵ that called for the church to be characterized by freedom, change and constant exodus from conformity, as pilgrim people. This was Käsemann's reaction to his observation of the nationalism and war theology made possible by the still dominating liberalism in the State church. Above all this book was his challenge to the majority of German Christians, whose reactionary nationalism enabled them to ignore, condone or even support the atrocities perpetrated by the National Socialist party, in the

belief that some people must suffer for the sake of the advancement and historical progress which liberal idealism believed to be the working out of God's purpose¹⁶. Much to his disappointment, and that of his contemporaries in the Confessing Church, the church after the war, under the direction of older, still liberal churchmen, rejected his proposal and continued along much the same lines as before, ignoring the radical challenge of dialectical theology¹⁷. The only real change was that the nationalistic focus was largely replaced by a drive for economical development and strength. As Käsemann rather dramatically puts it,

Had we freed ourselves radically from the perspectives and customs of Egypt, we should not now have been drawn into the truly atheistic dance of the golden calf, in the ideology of the marketplace¹⁸.

In 1946, Käsemann took up a professorship at the University of Mainz. He was subsequently appointed professor at Göttingen (1951) and then at Tübingen (1959) where he remained until he retired. It is readily apparent that his experiences and struggles under Nazism contributed to, if not fully determined, the style and methodology which have characterized his life and work. He set about in his academic work to find an answer to the chief problem which had confronted him during the difficult years as a pastor: the question of how the Bible could be used to speak to the every-day realities of 20th century Christians. The basic starting point to which he came is summed up by Osborn:

People have always used the Bible for strength and comfort and have chosen the passages which have been most rewarding. To Käsemann this seemed the wrong way round. Man should not choose according to his inclination what the Bible had to teach. There must be some way in which the Bible could speak in its own authority to correct and judge good people as well as others.¹⁹

From this basic assumption, reflecting his belief in dialectical theology, it was inevitable that what Käsemann took from the bible would confront and affront people, and that they would respond defensively to his challenges. Kerr makes the observation,

It is true that he likes a fight. . . . he thinks of theological work as essentially *militant*—and of course the same old battles have to be refought in every generation over somewhat different ground and that is no cause either for surprise or fatigue.²⁰

In view of the fact that during World War II Käsemann actually served as a soldier, and was held for a period as a prisoner of war, it is perhaps not entirely unfair to picture him as a character spoken of by another 'great' soldier:

Said the General of the Army,
'I think that war is barmy'
So he threw away his gun:
Now he's having much more fun.²¹

where the discarded military paraphernalia is replaced by an entirely new kind of battle-dress and the sharp weapon of historical critical exegesis, readily brandished by a skilled, courageous and forthright leader.

It is certainly true that Käsemann has involved himself in a great many controversies, some of the more well-known being disagreement both with Bultmann and Jeremias over the significance of the historical Jesus; with Bultmann over eschatology, existentialism and the righteousness of God; emphasizing the ongoing activity of the risen Christ rather than his mere survival, as the essential message of Easter; pointing out the diversity in the New Testament accounts of the church, and the necessity of diversity *for* unity, at an ecumenical conference aiming to find agreement on a theology of the church. Far from being dismayed at the effect of his conclusions, Käsemann insists that such controversies are absolutely essential for theology and the church. In his view, the best students always end up opposing their teachers.

His commentary contains innumerable allusions to debates and controversies, and at times enters into extended, uncompromising criticism of other interpretations. Similarly, many of his essays are written as direct attacks on fellow theologians. This is because he is convinced that the only way to learn and make progress in theology, is to be challenged to think through every idea. It is only by this

means that new and different notions are spawned. Osborn summarizes this position, saying, "[The exegete] is always learning and what he learns today will qualify what he concluded yesterday. . . . There is not a permanently valid self-understanding either for individuals or for epochs."²² This rather assertive approach, then, is not to be seen as unshakable confidence or immovable conviction, but as a means of being provocative enough to be heard in a way that demands response. It is an approach which involves risk, but "Theology, says Käsemann, is a dangerous business and if we want to avoid risks we should avoid theology and life as well."²³

Typifying this basic attitude, in 1981, the paper he presented at the celebration of the 50th anniversary of his graduation from Marburg, was an account of what he had *un-learned* (*verlernte*) during those 50 years.²⁴ He concludes this paper with the following words;

It has always been my practice to change fronts according to my present understanding of scripture and of each situation, not to store my seeds, but to throw them to the wind, and to unlearn what others had taught me. In this way one becomes lonely, even increasingly simple-minded. Certainly evangelical freedom demands its price, ultimately life itself. But evangelical freedom is the one thing that gives meaning to all learning and unlearning.²⁵

No-one can doubt that these words were said with pride and pleasure, if not with a little nostalgia. It is interesting to find in this echoes of the sentiments of the reformers who had opened the way to this evangelical freedom. Luther is recorded as having said,

It is always safer to listen to things which are contrary to our own thinking, than to listen to those things which approve and applaud our ideas and are in agreement with us.

and Calvin,

It will, however, I hope, be admitted that nothing has ever been so perfectly done by men that there is no room left for those who follow

them to refine, adorn or illustrate their work. . . . we have continually found . . . that there is by no means universal agreement even among those who have not been found wanting in zeal for godliness, or piety and moderation in discussing the mysteries of God.²⁶

Whatever the general validity of his claim, we are left in no doubt of the truth for Käsemann himself of his declaration that, "Controversy is the breath of life to a German theologian".²⁷

Käsemann's belief in the absolute necessity of controversy is not limited to his academic theology. Having, as an active participant, been strongly influenced by the church throughout his life, he had also come to the conclusion that conflict was an essential part of the Christian community. "Genuine and deep human relationships constantly lead to conflicts. It is precisely in these that they must prove themselves. Along my way they have piled up."²⁸ The frequency and tone of these references to conflict tempt one to suspect Käsemann of having an especially good ear for potential conflict and of joyfully seeking it out, much as a bear might seek honey:

One day when he was out walking, he came to an open place in the middle of the forest, and in the middle of this place was a large oak-tree, and, from the top of the tree, there came a loud buzzing-noise.

Winnie-the-Pooh sat down at the foot of the tree, put his head between his paws, and began to think.

First of all he said to himself: "That buzzing-noise means something. You don't get a buzzing-noise like that, just buzzing and buzzing, without its meaning something. If there's a buzzing-noise, somebody's making a buzzing-noise, and the only reason for making a buzzing-noise that *I* know of is because you're a bee.

Then he thought another long time, and said: "And the only reason for being a bee that *I* know of is making honey."

And then he got up, and said: "And the only reason for making honey is so as *I* can eat it." So he began to climb the tree.²⁹

One is hardly surprised when Käsemann says that, "living in the community of the church remains an adventure for me".³⁰

In the *church*, however, he does not speak of losing friends because of the stance he has taken. Rather, he says, controversies are to be short-lived, then forgotten, so one's opponents at one time will be fellow supporters at another, and vice versa. The most important thing to realise is that faith does not mean conformity, or that all is taken care of by grace. "Faith cannot dispense with thought. Otherwise it becomes sterile."³¹ Rather, new questions and the need for alternative forms of witness demand individual thought and action. In fact Käsemann goes so far as to claim, as he did at the ecumenical conference in Montreal in 1963, that it is the tension resulting from differentiation that makes solidarity possible.³²

It is logically unavoidable tensions, considered in a realistic manner, which create the possibility of understanding and life, true though it undoubtedly is that they can also be their destruction. Further there can be no fruitful life without such tensions.³³

It is in this defence of controversy, and demand for it, that the lasting effect of his experience under Nazism can be most clearly seen as the primary determining factor for Käsemann's life, work, and theology both as scholar and churchman. As Osborn reminds us, "The darkest days were when disagreement was not possible; the totalitarianism nightmare is not forgotten."³⁴

It is this experience, and the conviction that the issues behind it have never been resolved, that lie behind Käsemann's deepest felt and longest lasting controversy, namely, his opposition to those whom he calls Pietists. He finds their conformity and conservatism personally threatening, and the most serious danger to the ongoing life of the church. As he says,

Having grown up in the theological tradition of the dialectical theology and in the exegetical tradition based on the presupposition of historical and form-criticism, one feels almost a heretic in the face of the pietism which is everywhere gaining ground in New Testament scholarship.³⁵

At one point, his anger and frustration during a particular confrontation with pietism was such that he wrote his book *Der Ruf der Freiheit*.³⁶ A measure of

his feeling is the fact that it took him only a fortnight to write it. That he sees this issue as absolutely fundamental is reflected in the way he misses no opportunity to highlight the theme of Christian freedom in his exposition of Romans. More significantly, his interpretation of Paul's attack on Judaism as an attack on religious piety clearly has its foundation in this personal battle in which Käsemann is constantly engaged. While we will argue that Käsemann is here putting words, or at least meaning, into Paul's mouth, it can equally be said that, in so doing, Käsemann remains true to his claim, quoted above, that his work is always determined by those issues "which affected [him] personally and which had a direct bearing on the ministerial life within the church." In light of this, it could well be argued that the notion of a gospel isolated from preaching, and from the environment of preacher and hearer, is meaningless. It would seem, at least, that Käsemann is of the view that the gospel is real and effective only when it is preached in new ways relevant to the hearers. In saying this, he again involves himself in polemic against pietism, so that once more we see that even his theoretical assertions are fundamentally concerned with active ministry and actual concerns:

'Pure doctrine' finds concrete expression indeed in every sermon which makes Christ known as our Lord. Mere historical facts, however, make it difficult to understand it as a dogmatic system. It is always only present and living exclusively when it is newly discovered and newly proclaimed. Confession and theological school should not, therefore, cordon off Christian people into a religious ghetto. The wandering people of God breaks through all limitations and does not live from tinned rations carried along with it.³⁷

How then are we to sum up our picture of this colourful man? In recognition of his work on Romans, and his constant battle against seeking security in conservatism, the editors of his *Festschrift* say, "Justification and freedom, faith and the risk of free discipleship in the (political) everyday life of the world have remained Käsemann's byword to this day."³⁸ Alternatively, he may be characterized as a person who has sought tirelessly after truth, valuing his discoveries as deepening insight into problems rather than as final definitive answers, and recognising the provocative nature of truth.³⁹ It is certainly clear that it is this outlook, rather than any particular conclusions or actions, that he feels to be the offering of his

life and work that is of greatest value to future generations. As he said to students at Marburg on the 50th anniversary of his graduation*from that university,

Perhaps it is more useful to the young, if an old man tells the story of his life in and with the church as a history of conflicts, than if he harmonizes what on earth is never in harmony.⁴⁰

But perhaps most telling of all is his following sentence: "It is nowhere established that one may regard Heaven predominantly as a sphere of harmony."⁴¹ One cannot help but feel he will be disappointed if it is!

1.2 Käsemann's Exegetical Method and Approach

In the introduction we stated that a particularly attractive feature of Käsemann's commentary is his primary concern to explore "what Paul meant theologically."⁴² It cannot be disputed that the commentary is, above all, theological. Moule says, "Käsemann boldly plunges into a great theological exposition, full of fire and challenge . . . all the time it is the theological claims of the Pauline gospel that dominate the scene."⁴³ Fitzmeyer is of the opinion that Käsemann's concern with theology takes precedence over straightforward exposition of the actual text, a valid exercise in itself, but one that ought to be acknowledged. He suggests that

For all its thorough discussion of the problems in the Pauline text, for all its precious insights into many individual passages, it inevitably raises the question of Käsemann's own purpose in this commentary . . . he writes more as a systematic theologian than as an interpreter of Paul. Or rather, he comments on Paul's text on Romans with the concern of a systematician.⁴⁴

Sauter, likewise, speaks of the way Käsemann's theological presuppositions result in a systematic reconstruction that pre-determines the content of the interpretation. In particular, Sauter draws attention to Käsemann's belief in inner consequences and outer unity, his concentration on the justification of the ungody

and the obedient reponse of faith, and his emphasis on the polemical nature of the epistle as factors which shape the whole commentary.⁴⁵ Perhaps the general hesitancy of scholars when confronted with a theological commentary is most clearly expressed by Harrington's summing up of Käsemann's contribution:

At a time when when there is a renewed emphasis among NT scholars on history-of-religions matters and on history in general, Käsemann's attempt to focus attention on Paul as theologian is somewhat out of step with the interests and concerns of many of his colleagues. Some will even say that to write a convincing theological commentary without first having settled the historical questions is an impossible dream. But I feel that, while the historical questions are very significant and must be faced, it is also the duty of biblical scholars in every generation to take seriously and to grapple with the theological content of the documents they study.⁴⁶

This assessment is very much reminiscent of the general response to Barth's commentary. It emphasizes the similarity between Käsemann's approach and that of Luther, Calvin and Barth, in that each of these authors' commentaries is designed to proclaim a contemporary gospel.

While it is true that Käsemann's chosen approach does determine the shape of his commentary, and is thereby limited in certain respects, this is surely true of any approach. There is, however, an abundance of commentaries which concentrate primarily on the detailed exegesis of individual passages. One may find Käsemann's treatment of specific passages less than satisfactory, but his approach of finding the place of each passage within Paul's theology as a whole has its own value,⁴⁷ especially considering the relative scarcity of such endeavours. Nor is it entirely fair to suggest that Käsemann does not declare himself in this. In his preface he points out that he was originally assigned the task of revising Lietzmann's commentary. He found that he could not follow Lietzmann's approach and at the same time be true to himself and to "present-day realities and needs."⁴⁸ Instead, he says, "the emphasis will lie on what Paul meant theologically. This criterion will decide what must be taken into account in detailed exegesis and what is dispensable to our understanding."⁴⁹ With this aim, he prefers to make extensive reference to recent literature, noting the various interpretations and

his view of them, in the hope of bringing major questions to the attention of the reader and enabling him to make his own judgements*.

Considering his primary emphasis on deepening understanding rather than on final solutions, we maintain that his approach is entirely legitimate. He takes account of the reservations about his primarily theological approach when he explains that he had two concerns in mind: "As I have sought for systematic clarity in general, so the many details are meant to make critical testing possible and to stimulate open discussion."⁵⁰ Therefore, despite the similarities between Käsemann and the reformers and Barth, the differences are equally significant. Gisel highlights this when he says,

Nevertheless one should be careful of too quickly classifying it amongst the commentaries of the reformers and K. Barth. Käsemann's work is historical-critical throughout, and this justice at least must be rendered to the author, that he has read almost all the German, Anglo-Saxon and French literature devoted to Romans of recent decades. If the commentary is deliberately theological, it is not ignorant of historical research. On the contrary, it is at one with it throughout, knowing that theology is unaware of any state of innocence outside history and refuses at the same time to be content with the positivism of historical facts or to sink under their multiplicity.⁵¹

Käsemann is indebted to Baur and Bultmann for his emphasis on radical historical method, the approach which seeks "to sift out what is central from what is peripheral" and to relate everything to the centre, rather than treating a text as a "mass of verses which may be quoted for and against a particular viewpoint."⁵² This approach is necessary because of the diversity of ideas presented. At the same time, it relies on the conviction that such a centre is to be found. Käsemann takes this to be the case in Romans:

Until I have proof to the contrary I proceed on the assumption that the text has a central concern and a remarkable inner logic that may no longer be entirely comprehensible to us.⁵³

Käsemann differs from Baur in that the unifying centre he seeks is theological whereas Baur related Paul's ideas to what he saw as the central historical concerns

determining Paul's arguments. Considering Käsemann's strong views about the danger of focussing on history⁵⁴, such an approach could hardly be suitable for him.⁵⁵ Not that he ignores the place of history—he is critical of Bultmann for claiming that only the present was important for theology because past and future are inaccessible. As Osborn explains Käsemann's position, "To reject past and future because they are inaccessible ignores the simple fact that it was their pastness and futurity which made them important."⁵⁶

Käsemann instead regards history as the specific, material sphere through and over which God exercises his sovereignty.

Without giving consideration to the self-understanding of the first Christians, the interpreter of scripture would be sure to fall into a mythical-speculative understanding of history. On the contrary, the Old Testament is without doubt governed by the world-wide validity of the first commandment, and that commandment becomes concrete in the New Testament through the witness to the lordship of the crucified Christ in and over the whole world. The self-understanding of the disciple of Jesus arises from discipleship, not from an idea.⁵⁷

History is to be understood within the framework of the apocalyptic eschatology which the gospel reveals, which shows that all institutions and structures are judged.

The cross puts a stop to the so-called evidences or certitudes, as much in the religious order as elsewhere. Instead it opens up the theological question of identity: *Who* is man? *What* is the world? *Who* is God? As such it indicates a limit, a judgement carried on the history of man. But the limit is not only negative. It guarantees a specificity. It circumscribes a space. It institutes it. A no is inseparable from a yes. To deny is already to fix an identity.⁵⁸

To accept the gospel is to recognise oneself as a part of the world possessed by God and to join in the task of bringing all men to this recognition so that the whole world under God's sovereignty may be re-created just as those who believe have been. This history is fundamentally concerned with the destiny of creation,

and is therefore both concrete and contingent. Consequently, theology cannot be subordinate to history, nor can present history be understood without a theological understanding of past and future. On the same grounds Käsemann rejects Bultmann's anthropological approach because it focuses both on the individual rather than the world,⁵⁹ and on ever-changing man rather than on God as him who determines man.

The approach of discerning the centre of the gospel, behind a passage or, in this case, a whole epistle, is inevitably subjective. This subjectivity is qualified to an extent in that Käsemann would argue that it can only be done out of the experience of being taken hold of by the gospel. Understanding of the New Testament comes only through its being used. "The Bible . . . is only holy when, and to the extent that, the Lord speaks out of it, the Lord who dares not allow himself to be taken possession of like a piece of loot."⁶⁰ In other words, the reliability of an interpretation presented for others to use depends on the assumption that one is addressed by the gospel from outside oneself.

The subjectivity is also qualified by historical research: "the bible does not speak directly to our present situation as if the two thousand years in between did not exist."⁶¹ Historical research takes account of the original context and contemporary situation, in so far as it can be discerned, for isolating what is only particular, for determining word meanings, recognising that these can change according to context and period, and for giving a clue to the logic of a passage. As Osborn points out,

Without a minimum of historical and literary knowledge there is no way of distinguishing between historical, material and logical status. This is disastrous, as the following examples show. It is historically most probable that Paul was in prison at some stage in his life. It is not logically or materially certain, for there would be neither logical contradiction nor material impossibility (i.e. contradiction of known natural laws) in a claim that the reports of his imprisonment were circulated to protect him from invitations to preach and give him time to write. The claim is historically but not logically or materially absurd. "It ain't necessarily false", as the optimist said of Noah's Ark. Another account may be given of a theory that Paul wrote Ephesians with a new literary style because the governor of the prison had put him on a correspondence course to help him with his writing. Af-

ter his first few assignments he was using four-syllable words and twenty-word sentences with the best. This is historically and perhaps materially absurd but logically possible. Such theories might appeal to literalists who want to show the shakiness of the historical enterprise; they spring from historical ignorance and an inability to distinguish logical, material and historical absurdity.⁶²

Thus history to a considerable extent limits what an interpreter may take from a text, though clearly even historical decisions require a certain degree of subjective judgement. Käsemann differs radically from early researchers, and even the 19th century commentators, in that he acknowledges that there can be no such thing as a purely objective interpretation of the biblical texts. He also stands out against a significant proportion of more recent commentators who endeavour to be as objective as possible. In contrast, Käsemann affirms subjectivity as a *necessary part* of interpretation.

For late 20th century people who have grown up under the influence of the domination of science over all else, such a method may at first sight seem too unscientific to be of any real value. Against such an impression, Osborn gives a helpful illustration of Käsemann's point when he says

Criticism and subjectivity go together in the examination of scripture as in that of music or any form of art. While all technical problems must be considered, the final verdict cannot be reached by external norms. Bach uses consecutive fifths and Shakespeare double comparatives.⁶³

Accordingly, the only meaningful way to interpret biblical writings is to bring together the technical points with subjective apprehensions of it. In addition, from this illustration it is perhaps easier to understand how Käsemann can speak of there being no final, definitive interpretation. Just as a piece of music can have entirely different impact at different times of one's life, or a play or a particular part of it can strike one in an entirely new way depending on past experience or present mood, so, too, one's interpretation of scripture is to a significant extent subject to one's own historicity.

A final observation on Käsemann's approach to Romans is that his theological interpretation is dialectical throughout. Thus he particularly highlights the difference between Judaism and Christianity as an antithesis. He also focusses on contrasts between true and false theology, and apparently contradictory pairs of statements describing the gospel and its implications. In other words, he presents Paul as a dialectical theologian. The centre around which all else revolves is the theological expression of the gospel which Paul elaborates in the course of the epistle.

1.3 Käsemann's Interpretation of Romans

Our aim here is not to give a full account of Käsemann's commentary on Romans, but only to outline the major features of his approach. Since his exegetical method has been discussed above, this analysis will concentrate on his interpretation of 1:16f, along with reference to the perceived purpose and situation of the letter, and to significant features which are not specifically referred to in the discussion of 1:16f. In the course of this an indication of Käsemann's peculiar contribution should become apparent.

1.3.1 Purpose of Romans

In Käsemann's view, Paul is motivated to write this epistle because of his *own concerns* rather than in response to any suggestion of problems or false positions being held in the Roman congregation. He points out that

The epistle is clearly addressed to a community whose firm status as Christians is not in doubt, and from whom a high degree of theological understanding is required in view of the dogmatic concentration of this letter The accusations made by the apostle are not directed against them and are not meant to stir them to repentance.⁶⁴

This means that his purpose is *not* to spell out his missionary gospel in preparation for his preaching in Rome. This is confirmed by the content of the epistle.

Firstly, because his missionary preaching was concerned to present "the resurrection of Jesus and the lordship initiated therewith",⁶⁵ and secondly, because the exposition begins with a description of the wrath of God, knowledge of which is received simultaneously with the knowledge of God's righteousness and not prior to it: "missionary preaching should not and must not make God's wrath its starting point".⁶⁶ Nor, on the other hand, is it a theological tractate⁶⁷ since it clearly retains the form of an epistle addressed to specific, concrete concerns.

All the New Testament writers are concerned to take up and set in order the existing, and sometimes very contradictory, positions in primitive Christianity. Paul, who remained a controversial figure since his conversion, can be understood only when we see him, now offensively and now defensively, under the pressure of this need for theological clarification.⁶⁸

Although the letter is *strictly polemical*, in Käsemann's view it is not directed against the Romans⁶⁹. He concludes instead that Paul is concerned to present an *apologetic defence of his own teaching*. Clues to this are his declaration of high regard for the Roman congregation and the vagueness and constant qualification to his explanation for his proposed visit, and the mixture of assertion and diffidence in his claim to authority (1:8-15). "He obviously fears the mistrust and the suspicions of both his person and his work which are circulating in Rome."⁷⁰ Recognition of the ambiguity of Paul's position in the eyes of the church is, Käsemann maintains, essential for the understanding of Romans.

The authority which he asserts does not accord with what is conceded to him in fact. Even at the end of his course he stands in the twilight of unclear situations and in conflict with opposing positions about him. He has to reckon with the fact that doors which he passionately wishes to open are closed to him. The most important theological epistle in Christian history is undoubtedly also the record of an existence struggling for recognition and of an apostolicity called into question. Apart from this insight Romans cannot be interpreted correctly.⁷¹

As self-defence for work carried out over a considerable number of years, the epistle contains "the deposit of many debates" with "many digressions and . .

. leaps in the train of thought", so that the end result is not a self-contained, systematically logical treatise.⁷² Nevertheless, there is "inner consistency in the structure of the epistle, which is directed toward a concrete goal", the various debates offering not "examples or summaries of missionary proclamation" so much as "reflections which take up the motifs of such proclamation"⁷³

It is therefore only when Paul has presented his self-defence that, in hope of its acceptance, he dares to be more specific about his plans (15:22-29), though an element of caution remains. This is partly because of the awkwardness, on the one hand, of arrogantly implying that the Romans might expect to gain from his visit, and on the other, of giving the suggestion that he merely wants to make use of the Romans for his mission to Spain.⁷⁴ In addition, Käsemann suggests a further reason for a degree of vagueness, namely, that Paul's primary motive for writing in advance of his visit is directly related to his proposed journey, with the collection, to Jerusalem. Käsemann suggests that, even though the collection was being presented as a sign of solidarity with the Jerusalem church, it was just as much *an attempt to gain acceptance of the Gentile churches*, even though, "Materially, Paul's incontestable desire to achieve reconciliation and unity with the help of the collection is doomed to fail from the beginning."⁷⁵ *So Paul, Käsemann proposes, seeks approval from the well-known congregation in the imperial capital⁷⁶ in the hope that this acceptance may, when heard of in Jerusalem, sway things in Paul's favour.⁷⁷*

This suggestion takes account both of Paul's references to his visits to Rome, Spain and Jerusalem (15:24f) and makes sense of the content of an epistle, addressed to a church with a Gentile majority⁷⁸ but very much focussing on the scriptural basis of his teaching, and the position of the Jewish Christians, and the Jews, in an argument for the inclusion of the Gentiles. Käsemann spells this out as follows:

Finally . . . it can hardly be doubted that from the time of Herod, with the many commercial links, there existed a brisk traffic between the Jews in Rome and Jerusalem and that these influenced the Jewish-Christians too. If, then, Paul through his epistle could win over the Roman church and especially its Jewish-Christian minority, or at least dispel in part their existing suspicions, he would get rearguard protection in relation to Jerusalem too.

Whether he was successful or not one cannot say. What can be said is that the apostle made an attempt in this direction. This is why he meets the objections of his Jewish-Christian adversaries. This is why he stresses the course of salvation history and the final acceptance of all Israel. This is why, in the conflict between the strong and the weak, he is so unusually mild and accommodating to Jewish-Christians even regarding the observance of days. This is why he bases his gospel so firmly on Scripture, from which, too, he derives his own worldwide mission. Materially he surrenders nothing and accepts every risk. He shows the full implications of the doctrine of the justification of the ungodly by faith, even in exhortation, and bases ecclesiology and his own apostleship solely upon that, but he does so against the background of fulfilled prophecy. The "true Jew" could not reject his argument and Gentile-Christians, being warned expressly against despising their brethern, could only see their own status supported. Paul could hope, then, that the Roman community would not only help him in the west but also strengthen his position in Jerusalem. Naturally, this is a reconstruction. But history is the field of reconstruction, and whether these are right or not depends on how far they overcome the problems posed. This hypothesis does so to a very high degree.⁷⁹

With this suggestion Käsemann finds a way of uniting *all* the various historical clues into a single, though twofold, purpose. In contrast, all other commentators have stressed certain aspects and ignored others. To this extent, on the basis of the criterion for assessing historical reconstruction suggested by Käsemann, this hypothesis constitutes a valuable and unique contribution to the study of Romans.

Although the picture he presents of the conflict between Paul and Jerusalem may, under the influence of Baur,⁸⁰ be somewhat exaggerated, there can be no doubt that Jewish-Gentile relations within the early church *did* pose difficulties. The seemingly arbitrary claim that the polemic in the letter, apart from one small section,⁸¹ is *not* directed to the Romans as such, is also open to question. If a Gentile-Christian church was suddenly joined by a minority group of Jewish-Christians returning from exile, it would seem more than likely that a variety of problems regarding status and relationships might arise. Nevertheless, even if the whole epistle does have direct application for the recipients, Käsemann's reconstruction is not thereby refuted, especially since, if Paul intended to visit

Rome, he might normally have been expected to wait until he had made personal assessment of the problems. The fact that he wrote *first* can certainly be seen to admit the possibility of some such ulterior motive as Käsemann imagines to be behind the epistle.

1.3.2 Exposition of 1:16-17

As most of the key features of Käsemann's exposition of Paul's argument come to light, at least in part, in his discussion of Rom 1:16f, an outline of this is here presented as an indication of his overall approach and interpretation.

v.16

When Paul says he is 'not ashamed of the gospel' the reference is back to 1:14. A feature of Käsemann's Paul is that no human barrier can stand in the way of the service of the gospel to which he is called, since these are all thereby relativised: "as a messenger of the gospel he can uninhibitedly stride across the conventions and prejudices of the divided cosmos. . . . The whole world stands open to him, insofar as he is a servant of the Kyrios."⁸² For Käsemann a significant part of the gospel is that *each person* who receives it is at the same time *allocated and equipped for a specific task* which constitutes his personal charisma. Paul can carry out his apostleship since he is equipped with the necessary gifts for fulfilling his calling, the limits of which are divinely and not humanly determined.

Consistent with this, Käsemann argues that the gospel is an entity which *comes to man from outside*, and is therefore more than the message of preaching which speaks about it, and is essentially independent of the human control of the preacher or the church. Rather, "It is God's declaration of salvation to the world . . . which constantly becomes a reality itself in proclamation in the power of the Spirit. It can thus be called *δύναμις θεοῦ*."⁸³ As in the Old Testament, this salvation is to be interpreted, not as individual miracles, but as "God's activity which directs history."⁸⁴ As such, the gospel is "the epiphany of God's eschatological power pure and simple."⁸⁵ To recognise and accept this is simultaneously

to receive the salvation offered therein, and so to be determined "in time and eternity" in accordance with the "eschatological nature"⁸⁶ of this power. At the same time one comes to see one's *need* for salvation which was previously hidden (1:18ff). That the context is *eschatological*⁸⁷ is indicated by the fact that the gospel is 'the power of God *unto salvation*', where the Judaism of the day, and hence Paul, understood salvation to be *deliverance from final judgement*.⁸⁸ Emphasis on *power*, and on eschatology, along with an understanding of history qualified by this eschatological action in the gospel, are further features of the whole of Käsemann's exposition.

Finally, this power brings salvation to *everyone* who *has* faith, indicating both that the action has a *universal* orientation, albeit executed through individuals⁸⁹, and that this salvation is given *in the present* (8:24).

Where faith is, there is the place of salvation, and this implies not only assurance of future deliverance from the judgement, but, beyond that, also present peace and joy as a state of openness before God and man.⁹⁰

The universal aspect of the gospel is reaffirmed by the concluding phrase of v.16, 'to the Jew first and also to the Greek', or, in other words, the whole of mankind. The *proclamation* is made *for all mankind*, and, according to Käsemann, thereby *for the whole cosmos*, which is determined by man. At the same time each individual is responsible for his own reaction. Those who accept the gospel for what it is, trusting God, hoping against hope (4:18,20) in the face of the unexpected and inexplicable self-manifestation of God, thereby appropriate it. This acceptance, which is the essence of *faith*, *is itself a gift*, according to Käsemann. For him, it must be emphasized that this salvation comes one hundred per cent from God, though the notion of faith being a gift is undoubtedly paradoxical.

That Paul *distinguishes between Jews and Gentiles* is another important point for Käsemann, and another key feature of his interpretation. Far from being a mere illustration, or throw-away line, Käsemann sees here the first indication of what is to be the subject of Paul's whole argument. On the one hand, the reference to the precedence of the Jews is seen by Käsemann to be an affirmation

of the *continuity of salvation history*, on which Paul will expand in chaps. 9-11. On the other hand, this means of depicting mankind shows that "for the apostle the world before and outside Christ divides over the *nomos*. Therefore it belongs to the gospel, as it enters into earthly realities, to deal with the *nomos* from the very outset."⁹¹ Käsemann therefore sees chaps. 1-4 to be concerned with showing that the law, although given by God, does not and never did effect salvation, though God nevertheless remains faithful to his promise to those to whom it was given (chaps. 9-11). In chaps. 5-8 the *freedom* which justification by faith grants and the *new possibilities* opened up for believers are discussed. Chaps. 12ff then show how the salvation received can, and must, be *lived out*, without the law, as the obedience of faith in everyday life.

v.17

1:16 thus points, albeit with the utmost brevity, to the issues Paul intends to discuss in his epistle. 1:17, in Käsemann's view the theme of the epistle, indicates the content of Paul's gospel and, as Käsemann argues, the *central and unifying theme* of the epistle. The interpretation of v.17 is, he argues, decisive for the whole expositon.⁹²

Nevertheless, Käsemann makes a direct connection between the two verses, in that he sees the gospel proclamation as standing in *specific antithesis to Judaism* and the law:

Who God really is for Paul does not finally derive from the law but from the gospel. Derivation of the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* from the law is rejected; rather, this righteousness is proclaimed as the righteousness of faith.⁹³

Käsemann maintains that the revelation of the righteousness of God as the righteousness of faith effecting justification of the ungodly is Paul's distinctive version of the gospel, which sharpens the primitive Christian proclamation,⁹⁴ such as he records it in 1:3-4. Käsemann claims that what is important in this early proclamation of the death and resurrection of Jesus is

the *christological* point that is conveyed, namely, that *Jesus Christ is 'Son of God'*.⁹⁵ "Christ is enthroned as Son of God in the heavenly sphere of power."⁹⁶ This title, Käsemann tells us, "for Paul belongs to the pre-existent one"⁹⁷, and so establishes Christ as *Lord*. "For Paul the Kyrios is the representative of the God who claims the world and who with the church brings the new creation into the midst of the old world that is perishing."⁹⁸ On this basis Käsemann claims that the gospel Paul preaches presents the same basic message as the declaration that the exalted Christ is 'Son of God'. Thus he maintains that "The doctrine of justification is the specifically Pauline understanding of christology just as the latter is the basis of the former."⁹⁹

This combination of ideas can be seen to assume an intricate inter-connection between justification, resurrection and creation standing at the very heart of Paul's presentation of the gospel. Although Käsemann does not draw attention to this in his discussion of 1:17, it is a point to which he refers with increasing frequency throughout the commentary, focussing especially on the parallelism of the three themes, specifically presented by Paul in Rom 4. In relation to 1:17, it can at least be said that if these three notions, or at least justification and resurrection, are *not* equivalent, Paul's version of the gospel would have to be questioned in terms of its connection with the life and death of Jesus and the early proclamation of his resurrection. If his gospel is not fundamentally the same as, or consistent with, that of the Jerusalem apostles, one would have to conclude that he was propagating a different religion altogether. As it is, Käsemann *can* assert the equivalence of the two expressions of the gospel because of his belief that the designations of God in Rom 4 are equivalent and central to Paul's theology.

This means that in his interpretation of the *righteousness of God*, Käsemann can bring to his exposition ideas which arise more immediately from the earlier form of the gospel, to complement the meaning of righteousness which can be derived from the Old Testament accounts of the covenant. He does this in a number of steps, beginning with the explanation that

in biblical usage righteousness, which is essentially forensic, denotes a relation in which one is set, namely, the "recognition" in which one, for example, is acknowledged to be innocent. In Jewish apocalyptic

this understanding is applied to the verdict of justification at the last judgement. Justification, at first the presupposition and condition of salvation, as a gift already conferred *in nuce* includes eternal life, and thus becomes itself the benefit of salvation.¹⁰⁰

That righteousness "has to be regarded as God's gift", says Käsemann, "is apparent everywhere and allows the righteousness of God and the righteousness of faith to be equated."¹⁰¹ Rom 4:2ff, by emphasizing that it is not earned, comes closest to an explicit statement that *righteousness as the righteousness of faith is a gift*.

In seeming contradiction to this, Paul speaks of the life of faith as being one of submission to righteousness (10:3; 6:13ff). By speaking of believers as slaves of righteousness (6:18) and, in the same passage, as slaves of God (6:22) he appears to *equate* righteousness and God. Rom 8:1ff implies an equivalence between righteousness, spirit and God in its call to a life of submission. In light of these, and other statements from other Pauline writings, Käsemann concludes that *Paul "understands God's righteousness primarily as power rather than as gift."*¹⁰²our emphasis

Käsemann then goes on to argue that the apparently contradictory descriptions of righteousness as a gift and righteousness as God's power do not conflict in Paul's mind. On the contrary, such *antithetical claims are typical of Paul's theology*, as can be seen from a variety of examples which Käsemann cites.

Spirit is for the apostle both the divine power which encounters us in Christ and also the gift which is eschatologically granted to the Christians . . . Christ . . . [is] God's gift for us—"given for us"—and yet no less our Lord . . . *χάρις* is primarily the power of grace and yet it comes to individually concretized expression in charismata. Through the gift of Christ's body we are also incorporated into the sphere of the lordship of Christ's body."¹⁰³

In light of these examples, Käsemann argues against the view that Paul is inconsistent. His way of dealing with this is one of his particular contributions. Rather than having to choose between opposing ideas or give priority to one or

the other, the interpreter of Paul needs to recognise that the seemingly antithetical statements are to be held *in tension* because *Paul's theology is fundamentally dialectical theology*.¹⁰⁴ This recognition is the key to discovering the unity of Paul's thought. It also brings to light the full significance of *the gospel as divine involvement in human life*. In Käsemann's own words

All this not only has a broad inner context in Paul's theology; it is also constitutive for it. *For the apostle knows of no gift which does not also challenge us to responsibility, thereby showing itself as a power over us and creating a place of service for us.* Conversely, he knows no God who can be isolated from his creation, only the God who is manifest in his creation in judgement and grace, and who acts in relation to it as Lord. The apostle's genitive constructions which speak of the eschatological gifts fit without exception in this basic view, and do so in such a way that the stress falls on the genitive: it is in reality God himself who enters the earthly sphere in what he grants to us.¹⁰⁵ (our emphasis)

Käsemann generally abbreviates this claim by asserting that the gift is inseparable from the Giver.¹⁰⁶

In his interpretation of the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus which shows him to be the Son of God (Rom 1:2-4),¹⁰⁷ Käsemann argues that Jesus is the representative of the Creator who wishes to bring about the renewal of his creation, thereby demonstrating that the God who raises the dead is the God who re-creates what has become as nothing. In other words, Käsemann's presentation of the gospel as expressed in Rom 1:1ff indicates that the one action of God can equally be declared as resurrection or as creation. Now he has shown that the gospel which effects justification likewise is equally to be seen as an act which is fundamentally an act of creation. By bringing these alternative expressions of the gospel together, Käsemann is able to demonstrate that the righteousness of God is simultaneously justifying, creative and life-giving.

[The righteousness of God] speaks of the God who brings back the fallen world into the sphere of his legitimate claim . . . , whether in promise or demand, in new creation or forgiveness, or in the making possible of our service, and . . . who sets us in the state of confident

hope and . . . constant earthly change. With recourse to the Kyrios acclamation we may summarise the whole message of the epistle in the brief and paradoxical statement that the Son of God is as our Kyrios the one eschatological gift of God to us and that herein is revealed simultaneously both God's legitimate claim on us and also our salvation.¹⁰⁸

From this it is clear that Käsemann is able to regard the righteousness of God as the central and unifying theme of the epistle, since both the chapters that speak of the means and effect of salvation, and those which contain exhortation, simply reflect the dialectical tension between gift and power which characterizes God's righteousness. *The whole epistle is an exposition of the gospel which reveals the righteousness of God as gift and power in dialectical tension.*

Continuing his exposition of 1:17, Käsemann claims support for his eschatological emphasis from the word ἀποκαλύπτειν which, he says, "does not necessarily have an 'apocalyptic' sense," but that "in this context such a sense seems most natural. The gospel is the power of God because in it the divine righteousness breaks into the world as eschatological revelation."¹⁰⁹

Finally, ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν is in the form of semitic rhetoric, so that here Paul is stressing that the gospel becomes 'the power of God unto salvation' "always only in the sphere of faith"¹¹⁰. Paul then concludes by quoting Hab 2:4 to prove his point, though the meaning he gives to it is markedly different from that in the LXX.

In Käsemann's view, it is this Pauline emphasis on *faith* that *deals with the question of the law*, in accordance with the removal of the barrier between Jews and Gentiles of which 1:16 speaks, and in anticipation of the detailed discussion of this issue to follow. Käsemann argues this by pointing to the similarities between Paul and Qumran. Both speak of justification of the ungodly, of the righteousness of God as both gift and power, and of eschatological salvation revealed in the present. The one distinction is Christ. In Pauline, and all Christian theology it is through faith in Christ that salvation is granted. Here again the parallelism between different expressions of the gospel is significant. To accept the gospel of the Sonship and hence the Lordship of the exalted Christ is to be delivered from

judgement and placed in a relationship of submission just as is the case when one accepts the gospel which reveals God's righteousness. In contrast, justification in Qumran remains fixed to the covenant and therefore demands obedience to the law. Although Qumran members have the assurance of deliverance at the final judgement, they remain in submission to the law, thus being denied the eschatological existence in submission to God in the present given to believers.

In light of this contrast, Käsemann finds further support for his claim that the proclamation of the righteousness of God as the righteousness of faith is Paul's distinctive interpretation of the gospel: "Paul's doctrine of justification is simply a precise theological variation of the primitive Christian proclamation of the kingdom of God as eschatological salvation."¹¹¹ In contrast,

Since the christological connection is absent in Qumran, the identification of the righteousness of God with the righteousness of faith is also absent, the change of aeons is restricted to the sphere of the covenant, and anthropologically it is impossible to advance beyond the ethical dualism of the conflict between flesh and spirit.¹¹²

By analogy, the same could be said of all Judaism. The point of antithesis between the two religions is that the Jews under the law can only *anticipate* salvation, and then only while they remain faithful in their keeping of the law. The problem with this is that they tend to emphasise this, to the detriment of expressing the loyalty to God for which it was given, believing their piety will be duly rewarded. In contrast, those who recognise that they are ungodly rely entirely on God, which is in accordance with God's wishes. Consequently, the ungodly, when encountered by the gospel, believe, simultaneously recognizing their ungodliness and receiving salvation, whereas those who are sure of their salvation because of their keeping of the torah shut themselves off from the gospel and so from both insight into their plight and rescue from it. These Paul speaks of as relying on their own righteousness.

Käsemann's interpretation that the reference in 1:16 to Jews and Gentiles is a reference to the whole world which, prior to or outside Christ, is divided by the law, when combined with his view that Paul attacks the Jews as being pious, leads to the conclusion that it can equally be said that the world is divided

into the pious and the ungodly. He therefore argues that when Paul speaks of Jews and Gentiles he *actually* means the pious and the ungodly. "Gentiles and Jews . . . are viewed as representatives of humanity and together define the nature of the cosmos."¹¹³ More specifically, "In either Jew or Gentile the reality of mankind in its religious alternatives is disclosed in exemplary fashion."¹¹⁴ Thus the Jew is "representative of the religious person"¹¹⁵, the "typical representative of human piety directed to performance".¹¹⁶ In this way Käsemann generalizes Paul's argument in such a way that he can apply it directly to his own time and circumstances, or any other, for that matter.¹¹⁷

If we have understood him correctly, this paraphrases Käsemann's interpretation of Paul's argument against the Jews. Because Paul's concern throughout his ministry to the Gentiles was to show the difference between the claims of the gospel and the claims of Judaism, the expression of the gospel most suited to his purpose was that the righteousness of God effects salvation as justification of the ungodly by faith, in antithesis to Jewish belief that justification depended on keeping the law. In this respect it was a polemical gospel directed to a particular issue. Nevertheless, the fact that *this gospel could equally well be expressed as resurrection of the dead or creation out of nothing, and that it could therefore give rise to all other Pauline ideas meant that it had a validity and significance over and above the particular debate for which it was formulated*, or to which it was applied. Käsemann declares, "As justification, the gospel always means deliverance from wrath, the justification of the ungodly, eschatological *creatio ex nihilo*, and anticipation of the resurrection of the dead."¹¹⁸

In recognising this, Käsemann gives a breadth and depth to his interpretation of the central theme of the righteousness of God as justification by faith which distinguishes it from other interpretations which regard this doctrine as central. In recognising the dialectical nature of the righteousness of God as power and gift, Käsemann presents a view which accounts for apparent contradictions in Paul and demonstrates the relevance of God's righteousness for everyday life as well as for deliverance from condemnation at the final judgement, and so, in distinction from other commentators, is able to establish both the inner coherence and overall unity of the epistle.

1.4 Opposition to the View of the Doctrine of Justification as Centre

The view that the doctrine of justification is, in one sense or another, the centre of Paul's theology or argument in Romans, has long been held by a majority of Protestant scholars. At the same time, there has been a series of voices raised against this position, albeit to little significant effect. Some notable examples of this minority position are: Paulus, Lipsius, and Lüdemann, who gave equal or greater weight to new creation as summing up Paul's doctrine of redemption; Kabisch, who subordinated all Paul's theology and ethics to eschatology, redemption being future deliverance from judgement¹¹⁹; Baur¹²⁰, Jowett¹²¹, Wrede¹²², Schweitzer¹²³, Deissmann¹²⁴ and Stewart¹²⁵, who argued (though for different reasons) that union with Christ was the centre of Paul's theology, justification being merely a secondary doctrine concerned specifically with the particular issue of Jewish-Gentile relationships within the church; Althaus¹²⁶, who, along with Jowett, highlighted the differences between Paul's doctrine of justification and Luther's exposition of it; Munck¹²⁷ and Cullmann¹²⁸, who proposed salvation history as the key to the interpretation of Paul. A current representative of this school of thought is Stendahl¹²⁹, whose position is outlined below. If Käsemann is to be upheld in his interpretation of Romans, Stendahl's objections will need to be answered. A discussion of these will therefore form a significant part of our conclusion.

A somewhat different challenge to the centrality of justification by faith is based on the view that Paul's recognition of Jesus led to a radically new understanding of the role of Judaism and the law, so that justification by faith is concerned only with *defining* the new people of God, and effectively forming a new religion, while the *central* theological assertions are those which determine the ongoing life and self-perception of these people. This sort of argument is put forward by Davies,¹³⁰ and more recently and extensively by Sanders,¹³¹ whose work is outlined below and discussed in light of our study in the conclusion.

1.4.1 Krister Stendahl

Stendahl argues strongly against the centrality of the doctrine of justification, claiming that the prominence given this theme, and Romans as a whole, as "overarching and organising principles for the Pauline material"¹³² is a prime illustration of the way Pauline interpretation has for centuries "been out of touch with one of the most basic of the questions and concerns that shapes Paul's thinking in the first place: the relation between Jews and Gentiles"¹³³. The doctrine of justification is specifically related to this question, but it tends to be seen as an answer to the general question of how one is to be saved, with the specific situation being seen as an example of the general situation. This is because interpretation, as it in fact develops, loses sight of the mysterious role of Israel and concentrates on the Jews' failure in relation to Jesus and the gospel, so that they came to be seen as God-killers, stereotypes of the wrong attitude to God. This opened the way for Pauline theology to be generalized and seen as applying to the human predicament, and "justification became the timeless answer to the plights and pains of the introspective conscience of the West."¹³⁴

The problem we are trying to isolate could be expressed in hermeneutical terms somewhat like this: The Reformers' interpretation of Paul rests on an analogism, when Pauline statements about Faith and Works, Law and Gospel, Jews and Gentiles are read in the framework of late medieval piety. The Law, the Torah, with its specific requirements of circumcision and food restrictions becomes a general principle of 'legalism' in religious matters. Where Paul was concerned about the possibility for Gentiles to be included in the messianic community, his statements are now read as answers to the quest for assurance about man's salvation out of a common human predicament.¹³⁵

According to Stendahl this is even read back into Paul's own experience. But there is no evidence to suggest Paul suffered from guilt or a sense of his own sinfulness and hopelessness, either before or after his Damascus road experience. The key is a correct understanding of this experience. It is generally regarded as a conversion, a change of religion from Judaism to Christianity, but it is simply a new and special calling within the service of the one God. "God's messiah asks him as a Jew to bring God's message to the Gentiles."¹³⁶ He does not give up his

former faith but with a new understanding of his mission and the law which is an obstacle to Gentiles, Paul the Jew works as Apostle to the Gentiles. Throughout his letters it is his mission, not his 'Christianity' that he emphasizes.

In Romans Paul explains how the Gentile mission fits into God's plan. The doctrine of justification by faith is just one of his arguments concerned with the Jewish-Gentile situation, one which proves the right of Gentiles to be heirs of the promise without keeping the law. Gal 3:15ff argues that the law was an interim measure until the Messiah came so that there was no need for it to be now imposed on Gentiles. This says nothing about the relationship of Jews to the law. Rom 2-3 show that Jews are no better than Gentiles despite having an 'advantage', not that the advantage is revoked but that as far as salvation is concerned Gentiles now have equal opportunity. Rom 7 is not about man's predicament but about the goodness and holiness of the law. In fact Rom 1-8 is simply the preface to the climax in chaps. 9-11 where the issue is not one of gospel versus law, but the relation between the Gentile church and the synagogue, "between two communities and their coexistence in the mysterious plan of God."¹³⁷

Not only have Paul's experience and the place of justification by faith in his arguments been misinterpreted to gratify Western man in his internal existential struggles, but also the meaning of the term justification or righteousness. This is not just another word for forgiveness which speaks to "our basic anthropocentricity and psychologizing tendencies."¹³⁸ The Hebrew background shows that the concept of the righteousness of God was originally associated with salvation, triumph, victory, the destruction of enemies, something to be looked forward to in joy. It could be anticipated in the confidence which came with being God's chosen people. It was only later that this was modified and judgement came to be feared. Likewise,

the early church set loyalty to Jesus Christ and his messianic community as the key to salvation. There may be danger of apostasy—but each and every little irregularity of the individual Christian did not really threaten the hope of salvation.¹³⁹

In this context God's righteousness again had a positive, glorious meaning, not a

judging but a vindicating righteousness, anticipated with joy by those who knew themselves as belonging to God.

Finally, Stendahl believes that once the timeless human predicament was seen as the setting for Paul's theology the great variety of situations, thoughts and arguments in Paul's various epistles was lost sight of. "It was possible to homogenise Pauline theology since the common denominator could easily be found in generalized theological issues, and the specificity of Paul's arguments was obscured."¹⁴⁰ By taking account of "the setting as to Jews and Gentiles"¹⁴¹ and recognizing that he works within the framework of 'Sacred History'¹⁴² much of the richness and variety of Paul's thought can be seen.

1.4.2 E.P. Sanders

Another scholar who rejects the basically Lutheran interpretation of Paul's theology is Sanders. His study takes the form of a comparison of Judaism and Paul's religion. Taking the view that the structure and function of a religion is most effectively described by the means defined for "getting in" and "staying in",¹⁴³ he endeavours to describe and compare the religions in these terms. In this way he believes he can avoid undue bias by presenting a view of Judaism which is not limited to the study of motifs parallel to those which occur in Paul, but is a description of Judaism in its own terms which is compared with Paulinism described in its own terms.¹⁴⁴ By this method, he sets out "to destroy the view of Rabbinic Judaism which is still prevalent in much, perhaps most, New Testament scholarship",¹⁴⁵ namely, "the view of Rabbinic religion as one of legalistic works-righteousness"¹⁴⁶ and therefore the *antithesis* of Paul's religion, despite its foundation in Judaism and its borrowing of individual Jewish motifs, because Paul claims righteousness is *not by works of the law*¹⁴⁷. Sanders therefore sets out to present alternative views both of Judaism and of Paul's thought.¹⁴⁸

On the basis of his analysis of Jewish sources from 200 BC to AD 200, Sanders concludes that Judaism can be described as a religion of 'coventantal nominism', which he describes as follows:

The 'pattern' or 'structure' of covenantal nomism is this: (1) God has chosen Israel and (2) given the law. The law implies both (3) God's promise to maintain the election and (4) the requirement to obey. (5) God rewards obedience and punishes transgression. (6) The law provides the means of atonement, and atonement results in (7) maintenance or re-establishment of the covenantal righteousness. (8) All those who are maintained in the covenant by obedience, atonement and God's mercy belong to the group which will be saved.¹⁴⁹

Sanders goes on to point out that, "An important interpretation of the first and last points is that election and ultimately salvation are considered to be by God's mercy rather than human achievement."¹⁵⁰ Thus he rejects any notion that Judaism is a religion of legalistic works-righteousness.

In discussing Paul, Sanders refers to all of the Pauline epistles generally considered to be authentic¹⁵¹, and not just Romans. Nevertheless, his concern to counter the view of Judaism as works-righteousness, and justification as central in Paul, means that much of what he argues is direct refutation of a commonly held interpretation of Romans, and is therefore relevant to our study. The alternative view of Pauline theology which Sanders presents is, he acknowledges, indebted to Schweitzer both in structure and content.¹⁵² In particular, Sanders affirms Schweitzer's emphasis on eschatology and on the notion of incorporation into the body of Christ, and supports his rejection of 'righteousness by faith' as the centre or starting point of Paul's theology.

Schweitzer rejects the centrality of this phrase on three grounds:

1. Its orientation is *individualistic* whereas Paul's theology as a whole is not. (Sanders points out that, although Käsemann argues that the doctrine is not primarily oriented either to the individual or to a doctrine of man, he nevertheless shows the weakness of this argument in that he acknowledges that faith is a matter for the individual.)
2. Righteousness by faith cannot be central because it is *derived* from the eschatological doctrine of participation in the body of Christ.
3. Righteousness by faith cannot be central because it *relates only to the question of the place of the law*. It *does not give rise to*, or come into connection with *other theological themes*. Nor does it provide a basis for *ethics*.

Sanders acknowledges that connection with other themes and ethics can be shown from Paul's text, though he affirms the rest of point (3). Nevertheless, his particular emphasis is on (2), with the additional claim that righteousness by faith can be derived from a variety of other Pauline themes, and not just from 'being-in-Christ':

The simple fact is . . . that righteousness by faith can be derived from and understood on the basis of other aspects of Paul's thought such as possession of the Spirit and living in the Spirit, but not vice versa. It is for this reason that beginning with the assumption that the opening arguments of Galatians and Romans gives the clue to all of Paul's theology is ultimately misleading.¹⁵³

On this basis, Sanders acknowledges that the phrase can be used to *summarise* the gospel, but if it is taken as the centre or the starting point the basic thrust is missed. This is important because the "choice of the starting point is usually decisive in determining the adequacy of the description".¹⁵⁴

Instead, Sanders seeks an explanation of Paul's theology by focusing on what he sees as two basic convictions governing Paul's life, these are

1. that Jesus Christ is Lord, that in him God has provided for the salvation of all who believe (in the general sense of 'be converted'), and that he will soon return to bring all things to an end;
2. that he, Paul, was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles.¹⁵⁵

The first of these gives what Sanders believes to be the starting point for understanding Paul. Rather than starting with the plight of man, and then giving the solution to this problem, Paul starts with the solution, the fact that God had provided a saviour, and only then works out what the problem was. From the frequent, if brief, reference Paul makes to what he preached and what Christians believed, it would seem the structure of Romans may not reflect his approach. He speaks of Christ, Christ crucified, Christ dead, buried and raised. It is the lordship of the risen Christ, the salvation offered by God, not man and his plight, that Paul preached about. His purpose is to call individuals to faith, but what

he preaches about is what God is doing, which "is of cosmic significance and affects 'all things'."¹⁵⁶ How individuals are affected depends on whether or not they believe. 'Belief' and 'faith' are not the content of the preaching but the means of participating in the saving action of God.

This saving action had two main thrusts—future expectation and present guarantee. "The future hope in Christ (I Thess 1:3) may be specified either as the hope of salvation (I Thess 5:8) or as the hope of righteousness (Gal 5:5)."¹⁵⁷ When Paul uses the verb 'save' in relation to believers he generally uses the present or future tense, and where, in Rom 8:34, he uses the aorist, he says 'saved in hope'. This indicates that it is something in process, that consummation lies in the future. Likewise, resurrection is to be in the future. But in the meantime, believers have the Spirit, a present possession which is a guarantee of the future, manifested in gifts. All Christians have the Spirit and spiritual gifts—*charismata* or *pneumatika*. In their present life they are sanctified, cleansed, established in the faith, and urged to remain so, "so as to be found blameless on the day of the Lord."¹⁵⁸ They are also urged to cleanse themselves, and by repentance they can be re-established after lapses. That they have been sanctified (*hēgiasmenois*) is reflected in the name *hagioi*, whereas although they are justified they are not called *dikaioi*, 'the righteous', indicating that once believers are established in the faith, what is really of ongoing importance is that they *remain pure*, in readiness for final judgement.

Possession of the Spirit as guarantee leads into the idea of participation in one Spirit and union with Christ. Schweitzer's being-in-Christ mysticism is generally unacceptable to modern scholars, but Bultmann and his followers have overreacted and lost sight of the force and naturalness of Paul's thought. The idea of participatory union is not an exclusively Christian experience, but is applied by Paul to other relationships. Thus in I Corinthians, in arguing against sexual immorality and idolatry, he does not appeal to Old Testament arguments or self-understanding or general morality, but points out that these involve unions which exclude participants from union with Christ. They are unions of flesh which destroy union of spirit. The idea of participation in Christ is also used to prove other points but apparently does not require proof of itself. There is no particular fixed terminology or key phrase for this, but the theme of participation

is central: "*it is the theme, above all, to which Paul appeals both in parenesis and polemic.*"¹⁵⁹ The very diversity of the terminology—members of Christ's body, body of Christ, one Spirit, in Christ, Christ's, servants of the Lord—indicates how this theme permeated his thought.

Participation in Christ's death and the cleansing effect of his death lead into the idea of the power of sin. Sanders includes 'participation in the death of Christ' in what he calls 'transfer terminology', the terminology concerned with 'getting in' to the religion, of which 'believed' is the most characteristic in Paul. Whilst Paul inherited and repeated the idea of an atoning death, by speaking of participation he includes the idea of dying to the power of sin, thus seeing a forward thrust in the purpose of Christ's death.

That Paul, in thinking of the significance of Christ's death, was thinking more in terms of a *change of lordship* which guarantees future salvation than in terms of the expiation of past transgression, is readily seen by reviewing the passages concerning the Christian's *death with Christ*. *It is these passages which reveal the true significance of Christ's death in Paul's thought.*¹⁶⁰

There are also several other transfer terms. 'Freedom' again related to transfer of lordship, freedom from the bondage of the law and from the power of sin, enables the believer to live for God. 'Transformation' and 'new creation', expressed in both indicative and imperative mood, mark the beginning as well as ongoing, yet to be completed, aspects of being 'in'. 'Reconciliation' is accomplished by the death of Christ. This is a juristic term relating to sin as transgression and is preparatory to being given life. It does not require repentance or acceptance, it is simply received. 'Justification' and 'righteousness' are sometimes equivalent to reconcillation, sometimes to sanctification, sometimes to being set free from sin.

The question remains as to the relationship between the so-called participatory and juristic conceptions in Paul. This is best understood against the background of his attitude to the law and his perception of the plight of man. As pointed out above, Paul's argument begins with the solution to the problem:

Paul's logic seems to run like this: in Christ God has acted to save the world; therefore the world is in need of salvation; but God also gave the law; if Christ is given for salvation, it must follow that the law could not have been; is the law then against the purpose of God which has been revealed in Christ? No, it has the function of consigning everyone to sin *so that* everyone could be saved by God's grace in Christ.¹⁶¹

This means that the reason Paul concludes that the law cannot give salvation is not that man *must not* be able to obtain salvation by his own efforts but that, *if* the law can save, *then* Christ died in vain (Gal 2:21). Salvation is not obtained by coming to depend on God rather than being self-reliant, but by participating in the death of Christ and belonging to him. That keeping the law and being Christian are incompatible is the cause, not the consequence, of Paul's attitude. "Since salvation is only in Christ, *therefore* all other ways toward salvation are wrong, and attempting to follow them has results which are the reverse of what is desired."¹⁶²

It follows from this that Paul's break with Judaism was based not on his doctrine of justification by faith but on salvation only through Christ. The argument for justification by faith is an argument against the necessity of keeping the law, not a definition of faith. It is an argument that asserts that salvation is equally available to Jews and Gentiles. "It is the Gentile question and the exclusivism of Paul's soteriology which dethrone the law, not a misunderstanding of it or a view predetermined by his background."¹⁶³ Otherwise Paul has a positive view of the law, but its requirement is fulfilled only in Christ and its aim, life, is accomplished only in Christ.

Similarly, Paul's perception of the plight of man is derived from his conviction that salvation comes by dying with Christ to sin and belonging to him, by being in the Spirit, in Christ, rather than in the flesh. The call for a transfer of lordship to Christ shows that redeemed man is under the power of sin.

Having come to this conclusion about the power of sin, Paul could then *argue* from the common observation that everyone transgresses . . . to *prove* that everyone is under the lordship of sin. But this is

only *an argument to prove a point*, not the way he actually reached his assessment of the plight of man.¹⁶⁴

The realisation that all, not just Gentiles, are enslaved to sin leads to the conclusion that the expiatory system of Judaism did not respond to the plight of man. Since repentance did not involve a change of lordship it could not effect the transfer from death to life. Thus juristic and participatory concepts are held together, and ultimately amount to the same thing, but it is the participatory concept which gives the full meaning of what is involved in salvation.

In response to considerable criticism, Sanders subsequently published a second work in support of his argument against the centrality of righteousness by faith. In this he aimed to clarify and/or modify his views, particularly with regard to Jewish and Pauline attitudes to the law.¹⁶⁵ In this, he concentrates on Paul's statements about the law in Galatians and Romans.

Noting that Paul, having been a diligent Jew, and having consciously broken away from obeying the law, could be expected to have a clear opinion about the law, Sanders points out that disagreement over what Paul "really meant" continues amongst scholars, because of the diversity of Paul's statements about the law. His explanation and method of dealing with the problem indicate the approach taken in his study.

One of the factors which makes Paul's statements about the law hard to unravel is the general difficulty of distinguishing between the reason for which he held a view and the arguments which he addresses in favour of it The proposal of the present monograph is that the different things which Paul said about the law depend on the question asked or the problem posed. Each answer has its own logic and springs from one of his central concerns, but the diverse answers, when set alongside one another, do not form a logical whole, as might have been expected had he set out to discuss the law as such.¹⁶⁶

The particular focus of this study of the law is to determine *why Paul said no-one is justified by works of the law*.

The notions which Sanders here considers to be Paul's central convictions are that God sent Jesus Christ for the salvation of all; that this is available to all on the same basis; that the Lord would soon return to bring all things to an end; that Paul was called to be apostle to the Gentiles; and that believers should live according to the will of God. He does not consider more general beliefs, such as that God is one, that Paul would have held before his conversion without concluding therefrom that Jews and Gentiles are saved on the same terms.¹⁶⁷

Sanders now clarifies his position with regard to the centre of Paul's religion. He explains that his concern is not with determining Paul's central thought, but with the central *terminology* used to speak of the transfer from an unsaved to a saved state. Thus he now suggests that the various expressions relating to participation in Christ are not necessarily synonymous, but that they are coherent. He also acknowledges that this framework does not encompass all that Paul said or thought, so is not central in that respect. Nevertheless, he holds to his conclusion that righteousness terminology is concerned only with getting in, and not with the ongoing maintenance of the saved state, so therefore cannot be regarded as central.

In spelling out his understanding of Paul's assertions that *righteousness is not by works of the law*, Sanders suggests that the *subject* Paul is addressing is *soteriology*:

The logic is how one transfers from the state of sin and condemnation to the state which is the pre-condition of the end-time salvation. Since Paul thought of those who would be saved as constituting a group which he calls by various terms, I have called the logic "how to enter the body of those who would be saved." What Paul says on this logic, as it touches the law, is "not by means of observing the law."¹⁶⁸

In saying this, Sanders points to his first claim, namely that when Paul speaks of 'works of the law' the emphasis is on the law, i.e., the Mosaic law, and not on works. Paul's point, then, is that "one need not be Jewish to be 'righteous'"¹⁶⁹. Since Judaism believes that observing the law is "a sign and condition of favoured status"¹⁷⁰, signifying acceptance of the covenant, Paul's assertion constitutes an attack on the traditional and characteristic features of Judaism, namely election

and the law. This attack, however, is not arrived at on the basis of observed failure of the Jews. It is not because the law cannot be kept or that it leads to legalism, self-righteousness or estrangement from God. Nor did Paul arrive at this conclusion through a new understanding of Scripture. Rather it is his central convictions which came to him on conversion that led him to reject traditional Judaism and to interpret Scripture in a new light.

Sanders argues that there were two major convictions which led Paul to declare that salvation was not to be attained by election and the law. Firstly, he had become convinced that *it was God's intention that salvation should be by faith*. Therefore, by definition, salvation was not by law, but by faith in Christ. It is this affirmation of christology that is important for Paul, and not the expiation for past sins on which the majority of commentators focus. Secondly, *it was God's intention that Gentiles should join the body of those to be saved on the same basis as the Jews*. This, too, means that the law must be excluded as a means of entering, and the Jewish privileges of the law and election do not count towards salvation. Combining these two convictions, Sanders claims that Paul was convinced that it was God's intention that all be saved on the basis of faith. Therefore *Paul's criticism of Judaism is simply that it does not provide for the salvation of all on the basis of faith in Christ* without the exclusively Jewish promises, covenant and law. This means that Paul's rejection of the law is based entirely on the fact that it has been superseded, or surpassed, and is in no way a comment on his pre-Christian life under the law. Hence Sanders maintains that caricatures of Judaism as legalistic works-righteousness have no foundation in Paul's writings.¹⁷¹ In fact, Sanders argues, Paul retained a basically positive view of the law, believing that if God gave it, it must have some positive purpose.¹⁷² Although Paul's remarks on the subject are difficult and not entirely consistent, overall it can be maintained the Paul argued that God deliberately gave the law with the negative purpose in his plan of salvation of preparing mankind for righteousness by faith by reducing both Jews and Gentiles to the same plight of being under the bondage of sin. In arguing this Sanders claims that when Paul uses the first person he is referring to both Jews and Gentiles. When he says we are under the law and therefore under sin, he effectively equates the law to the pagan idols of the Gentiles.¹⁷³ All are delivered on the same basis, so conversely all are in the same plight. Other parallels to being under the law are being under

sin or being born according to the flesh. The point is that since all are saved by faith in Christ, all must have been in the same initial situation.

Conversely, Sanders argues, Christ dies in order to condemn sin *in the flesh*, so that *the law could be fulfilled* by those who walk *according to the Spirit*.¹⁷⁴ Arguing that Paul's admonitions are either summaries of the law or consistent with it, his instruction to converts is that, although salvation does not depend upon it, in order to remain within the community of those to be saved, they should observe the whole torah (with certain arbitrary exceptions). In other words, believers are to die to the law and not remain under its jurisdiction, but this does not mean they should be lawless. They should keep the law through the Spirit in obedience to their Lord, the risen Christ. Sanders agrees this is difficult to understand, but asserts it anyway. Thus, although *entry* to the community is *not* by works of the law, *remaining* in *requires* fulfillment of what the law requires. In this respect Christianity and Judaism are basically the same. One *enters* the favoured community by *God's grace*, but, having entered, one *remains* in by means of *obedience to the law*. Although membership guarantees salvation, one is nevertheless *rewarded or punished according to God's judgement of one's deeds* as a member, though still saved, unless faith itself is abandoned.¹⁷⁵

Sanders main thesis can, accordingly, be summarised by the following table:

Religion	Getting In	Staying In
Judaism = Covenental Nomism	Election	Fulfilment of the law
Christianity = Participationist Eschatology	Justification by faith in Christ (not by works of the law)	Fulfilment of the law through the Spirit, being-in-Christ

Paul rejects Judaism purely on the grounds that

1. It does not allow for faith in Christ;
2. It does not allow equality for Gentiles.

Apart from this, Judaism differs from Christianity in that

1. In Judaism righteousness terminology applied to staying in;
2. In Christianity righteousness terminology applies to getting in.

The arguments of Stendahl and Sanders against the centrality of the doctrine of justification or righteousness by faith, will be discussed critically, in light of the ensuing study, in the conclusion.

1.5 Methodology

As indicated in the Introduction,¹⁷⁶ we propose to assess Käsemann's contribution by testing the validity of his claim that the three statements, that God is 'he who justifies the ungodly' (4:5), 'who gives life to the dead' (4:17), and who 'calls into existence the things that do not exist' (4:17), are both central and equivalent, by studying each of these designations of God in turn. Since we maintain that this observation lies at the heart of Käsemann's distinctive approach, confirmation or dismissal of this claim will, in effect, amount to an assessment of the exposition as a whole. If it can be shown that each of the three themes plays a central role in Romans, in that each gives rise to all the rest of Paul's theological ideas and results in a unified argument, it would seem fair to conclude that Käsemann is correct in his interpretation. Further confirmation of the equivalence of the statements will result if it can be shown that Paul himself actually parallels or interchanges these concepts in his arguments, as well as in Rom 4.

Our *argument* is that all other ideas in Romans are logically related to the central designations of God. Therefore, it is necessary to gain our perception of what is being said in each of the terms from outside Romans. Otherwise the argument would simply be circular. Since Paul came to faith in Jesus from within Judaism, we may assume that he approached the faith from this perspective. Therefore, for each of the themes, we begin by highlighting the use of these ideas in the Old Testament and later Jewish writings, or, in some cases, by noting approximations to them. By this means we should gain some picture of Paul's previous idea of God, and of the range of ideas or language Paul might already have thought of as being specifically connected with these notions. It is arguable that a study

of the Hellenistic background ought also to have been conducted. We maintain, however, that for the purposes of this exercise it is sufficient to take the view, advocated by Hengel¹⁷⁷, that such Hellenistic ideas as might be present would already have infiltrated into Palestinian Judaism and hence, we assume, would to some extent have flavoured the writings of later Judaism. Further, we would argue that, while the Hellenistic background may be important for *understanding* certain notions in Paul, logical connections within Paul's train of thought can be made without knowledge of such background. On the other hand, it seems reasonable to assume that Paul's picture of God himself would be unlikely to be other than fundamentally Jewish.

On the basis of the picture of the theme derived from Jewish writings we then demonstrate the centrality of each by highlighting its role in Romans. We intend to limit our discussion to this particular purpose, although in the course of working through the epistle it will be necessary to attempt an historical reconstruction, and to present the argument as it comes across, rather than necessarily assuming Käsemann to be correct in every respect. We contend that different conclusions on these aspects would not necessarily call into question our basic thesis that Käsemann has made a distinctive contribution by focussing on Paul's parallel designations of God.

In order not to lose sight of our purpose and so become as unclear as we accuse Käsemann of being, other aspects normally considered to be part and parcel of interpretation are largely ignored. By largely omitting historical critical details, ignoring other issues and debates, and seeking to discuss the *general thrust of Paul's argument* in terms of *logically connected themes*, rather than to enter into an exegetical study, we shall endeavour to do justice to Käsemann's insight in a way that was not possible for Käsemann in his commentary. In addition, the opinions of other scholars, while taken into account, are not mentioned to any great extent. Although something of an exaggeration, we cite Hammond in support of this omission and, analogously, the others mentioned above:

. . . if all that hath formerly been observed and written by others had here been summarily repeated, it would have given a vast, but unnecessary bulk to this *volume*: and therefore for those things which have been already thus largely insisted on, . . . the care hath been

to leave the *Reader* from their own hands to receive the account, and reap the benefit of their excellent labours (which are everywhere to be met with,) and not to adde one *volume* more to the great number of those which are already enriched with the spoils, and swelled by the transcribing of others observations.¹⁷⁸

Again in order to minimise the amount of extraneous material, questions of textual criticism and, in general, translation, are left aside. In our view, the broad nature of our study means that, on the whole, it ought to be possible to come to a satisfactory conclusion by simply concentrating on the text presented in Nestle-Aland (26th ed.) and the RSV translation.¹⁷⁹

This approach leaves us open to a charge of being unscholarly, as Jülicher charged Barth.¹⁸⁰ It is not our intention, however, any more than it was Barth's, actually to reject historical criticism. Rather, we choose to take it as read, in order to concentrate on the next stage of interpretation—the inter-relation of Paul's theological ideas. On the other hand, we do not go as far as Barth, in that we do not aim to expound Paul's meaning as such. Our concern is simply to look at the logical interconnections in Paul's argument. Thus it is clear that our evaluation is a very limited one. We further limit ourselves in that we do not claim to be attempting any more than to investigate the feasibility of Käsemann's basic idea, without attempting to show in any way that it is necessarily the only workable interpretation, and without claiming to understand or apply these themes exactly as Käsemann does.

The above discussion of our approach to our study of Romans is expressed almost entirely in negative terms. More positively, we could describe our methodology as being more or less along the lines of New Testament Theology, or, in view of our use of background material, an approximation to Biblical theology. This is not to say that literary and historical criticism and philological research are not essential to the task of New Testament theology. It remains the case that for these aspects we depend on other commentators, and acknowledge that a fuller treatment would require that conclusions on these points be cited. Nevertheless, our method does concentrate to an extent, on the distinctive aspect of New Testament theology, as opposed to exegesis as such. Barrett described the method as follows:

The work of the New Testament theologian is not exhausted in literary, linguistic, and historical processes, fundamental and indispensable as these are. It is not within the province of New Testament theology as such . . . to rephrase, to reconceptualize, the Christian Gospel in the thought forms appropriate to today: this is the work of the systematic theologian and apologetics. It is, however, the task of New Testament theology so to delineate the relation of any part of the New Testament message to its original environment as to make it detachable from that background and thus available for restatement in terms of a new environment; not perhaps actually to universalize it but to make it potentially universal in intelligibility and application. The core of this operation is to be found . . . in the relating of each unit of the New Testament to the centre of the New Testament . . . and to interpret [each] in the light of that centre.¹⁸¹

By 'centre', Barrett means, "some part or aspect of [The New Testament] which expresses the content of the whole with special clarity, force, or precision."¹⁸² Clearly, then, what we are doing is a much reduced form of the task, though also preliminary to it. In the sense that we are attempting to relate each part of Romans to its centre we could, by analogy, describe our approach as 'Romans theology'. To the extent that isolating the centre of Romans may be a first step towards isolating the centre of the New Testament, our task is oriented towards New Testament theology. Certainly the doctrine of the justification of the ungodly by faith, the gospel revelation of the righteousness of God, if it is indeed synonymous with creation out of nothing and resurrection of the dead, must surely be a strong contender for the position. In fact an attempt has already been made to demonstrate that Käsemann's interpretation of the centre of Romans is indeed the centre of the New Testament.¹⁸³ If the three designations of God could be shown also to be central to the Old Testament, this work could also be extended back, and form the basis for a biblical theology. In fact, to the extent that Old Testament background is used in our study, it must be acknowledged that we have already moved beyond the strict limits of New Testament theology.

This approach is taken because of Käsemann's emphasis on the question of a centre to Pauline theology, as expressed, for example, in his statement, "I should like to maintain the provocative thesis that . . . the apostle is undoubtedly upheld in his whole work by a central message."¹⁸⁴ By this we understand Käsemann to



be claiming that the central theme alone is sufficient for understanding the whole argument. Thus, when he declares that all else is subordinate to the central concerns, we take it that he means not only that these are less important, but that they are in some sense derived from the central theme. If this can be upheld, it will indeed be true that his work has advanced the understanding of Romans. The logical conclusion of this claim would be that any insight into the meaning of a central theme would automatically cast light on the meaning of subordinate notions. Conversely, insight into the meaning of a minor point should be applicable to seeking understanding of the central theme, or another minor point through the central theme. As we noted, the task of presenting Paul's meaning in present day thought forms is beyond the scope of this work, but if Käsemann proves to be correct, this work should provide a basis for ascertaining it.

In conclusion, then, having discussed the three themes separately, we should be able to see whether Käsemann is justified in asserting that, "creation, resurrection, and justification declare in fact one and the same divine action"¹⁸⁵ and as such constitute the centre of Pauline theology. In addition, we should be in a position to evaluate his claim for the priority of the doctrine of justification. Likewise, it should be possible to show whether or not those, such as Stendahl and Sanders, who reject the notion of the centrality of the doctrine of justification by faith are correct in their criticism. A discussion of these questions will form the basis of our conclusion.

Chapter 2

The God who Creates out of Nothing

2.1 The Concept in some Background Literature

According to our understanding of the notion of a centre of theology, the central theme is the axis from which all other notions are derived. This suggests that an understanding of the central notion should provide the key to understanding of all other notions. If the statement, that God is he who brings into existence that which does not exist, is central, it ought to be possible to relate all other themes to this, and gain some insight into their meaning directly from it. Therefore, before we endeavour to demonstrate that all the Pauline concepts in Romans can be related logically to the idea that God is he who brings into existence that which does not exist, some more extended picture of how Paul might have understood this theme is to be sought. Although it is arguable that Paul's 'conversion' to faith in Christ as Lord may have radically altered his previous perceptions, his conclusions must nevertheless be dependent on his previously held convictions, even as contradictions. Hence a study of these must be of considerable significance. We will seek to demonstrate, however, that it was not his perception of who God is that changed for Paul, but only his understanding of God's purpose, and hence of his requirements, and his reason for changing these through his action in Jesus Christ.

In this section, we present some views of God as Creator found in the Old Testament and some other pre-Pauline Jewish literature. We can be fairly sure that Paul was familiar with the Old Testament. As far as other writings are concerned,

it is not suggested that these were influential in his thinking. Nevertheless, it seems fair to suggest that these other writings record the existence of these ideas and hence indicate something of the range and general nature of the sorts of understandings to which Paul could have had access, or which might have been current among his contemporaries. Even if Paul had no direct knowledge of some of these perceptions, it is our belief that they are still relevant. The history of the development of ideas, perhaps particularly in the field of modern science, shows that similar or even identical theories can be arrived at simultaneously by entirely independent researchers. This suggests that the combination of the current stage of development, current needs, and environment, can give rise to a particular understanding, without there being direct influence or mutual awareness of others engaged in the same particular line of thinking.

Although we speak above of understanding, strictly speaking, this is really too strong a word to indicate what it is we are seeking in this particular study. As indicated in the section on methodology, our emphasis here is on the association of ideas, and their logical implications. In this investigation, therefore, we look at the inter-relation of ideas about creation with other ideas within the history of Israel, without attempting to move out of that context. Thus language used remains largely biblical, the attempt to translate this into 20th century language and concepts, relating to the context of modern life and self-understanding being, to our particular way of thinking, better left until the pattern of inter-relationships of ideas has been clarified. In other words, as we have said, this exercise is to be regarded as preliminary to the task of attempting to give meaning for *our* context, to the biblical ideas as presented in *theirs*.

For convenience, and in conformity with general usage as we understand it, the expression, 'He who brings into existence that which does not exist', is generally abbreviated to 'He who creates out of nothing'. This action, then, is spoken of as 'creation out of nothing' or '*creatio ex nihilo*'.

2.1.1 The Old Testament

There are numerous references to God as Creator, using a number of different terms to describe his creative activity, scattered throughout the Old Testament. There are, however, two main sections which make more extensive use of this concept, namely, Genesis and Deutero-Isaiah. Since these sections appear to contain the most developed understanding, while incorporating at least in vestigial form, the ideas and terminology used elsewhere, attention will largely be limited to these.¹ Further, because the purpose of this study is to attempt to throw light on Paul's use of the concept in Romans, concentration will primarily be directed to those aspects which seem particularly relevant to this, at the risk of passing over rather lightly some points which may be important issues amongst Old Testament scholars.

Genesis

The understanding of God as Creator as presented in Genesis must, in the first instance, be interpreted in the light of its place within the whole Pentateuch. According to von Rad, the primary focus of this part of the Old Testament is the story of the action of the covenant God, Yahweh, in his founding of the Israelite nation, from the call and promise he gave to the patriarchs, the growth of the nation within Egypt, to his leading them out of Egypt across the Red Sea, through the wilderness, and finally to the Jordan, with the promised land beyond. This ancient, sacred history is then *extended back* to the creation of the world. The nation's experience of utter dependence on this God, with his unique power and authority within history, led to the conclusion that the whole natural world must likewise lie under his power and authority. "It is not that the Creator is Yahweh but rather that Yahweh, the God of Israel, is Creator."² Thus the creation account is not included for its own sake, as an article of faith, but as a starting point of history, in particular the history of a nation which believed itself elected and protected by one God. As von Rad puts it,

It points the course that God took with the world until he called Abraham and formed the community; and it does this in such a way

that Israel looked back in faith from her own election to the creation of the world, and from there drew the line to herself from the outermost limit of the protological to the center of the soteriological.³

This is not to say that Israel always had this understanding of creation. The Pentateuch is a developed theological document compiled long after the completion of the stage of history it describes. The various major sources which may be detected within it are also relatively late. Source criticism indicates that a variety of oral traditions were incorporated both in the sources of the Pentateuchal creation account, and in references to creation throughout the Old Testament. These have much in common with primeval stories and myths of other ancient peoples. It is believed that such myths arose as man struggled for preservation and security in the face of threatening surroundings, that "myth belonged originally to the context of survival, an expression therefore of one's understanding of . . . the existence of the threatened self".⁴ It is reasonable to assume that the earliest oral traditions within Israel had a similar origin. The integration of these with faith in Yahweh became possible when creation was recognized as part of the history of Yahweh's saving acts, as the starting point of history. This connection distinguishes the Genesis account of creation from other myths, though only a restricted definition of myth would allow us to assert that it is on this account not mythical.⁵

This theory concerning the development of the idea of God as Creator is significant for our study in that it supports Käsemann's claim that creation, justification and resurrection all express the same divine action. While justification and resurrection can readily be understood as declaration of salvation, it is only as we see that, within Judaism, creation, too, was fundamentally an expression of salvation, that it becomes obvious that creation does parallel these other two expressions as declarations of God's saving action. Even so, it is difficult to understand the logically absurd concept of creation as saving action. How does the bringing into existence of something previously non-existent constitute saving action? Again the theory here helps, since it shows that it is a notion come to by people, already existing, looking for security in a threatening world. By asserting that one had been created by Yahweh one could justify one's existence and face threats in confidence of one's right to be there. When Yahweh is seen as

Creator of all that is, and therefore the one with absolute authority over all that happens, one can find security in knowing that if one exists, it is by the choice and authority of the greatest power of all, who can therefore be counted on to protect and save what he has brought into being.

Two other ideas which come to light here are also important parts of Käsemann's exposition of Paul's theology. Firstly, the notion that, as Creator, God has unique power and authority over history and the whole natural world is expressed by Käsemann as the Creator's right to Lordship over the creation. From a human point of view, acceptance of this Lordship constitutes submission to this power and authority. Secondly, the notion that the affirmation that God is Creator is not to be taken as an article of faith, but again as submission to the Lordship thus established, is a point Käsemann emphasizes. With a view to the next stage of exposition, we could speculate that, if it is so that creation, resurrection and justification all proclaim the same event, it may be that the gospel might best be proclaimed in terms of God as Creator as the most relevant form of salvation to be declared to 20th century man, for whom annihilation could be seen as the greatest threat.

Genesis 1-11, which gives the account of Yahweh's interaction with mankind prior to his calling of Abraham, which arose out of this integration of early traditions about meaning and continuity of existence with faith in a God who performs saving acts in history, is in itself a unit with a definite structure. Westermann⁶ isolates this in a way which may be helpful for our understanding of Romans. He shows how, having described the creation of the world, the narrator goes on to show the perversity and limitation of man in his relationship with God (chap. 2) and with his brother (chap. 3). The course of human civilization is then traced (chap. 4), and the possibility of the destruction of human life is pointed out in the story of the flood (chaps. 6-9). The promise of preservation following the flood complements the creation account, highlighting a close correspondence between beginning and end. The genealogies form a framework, indicating the generations from Adam to Abraham.

As Westermann points out, the unity of this account is highlighted by certain parallels at key points throughout chaps. 1-11. Firstly, both the creation and the

flood stories are concluded with a blessing, which is in fact an imperative, "Be fruitful; and multiply, and fill the earth' (1:28; 9:1). The animals are similarly blessed (1:22). This suggests that, basically, to be blessed is to be granted fertility, the power to reproduce one's own kind, to have descendants.⁷ The realization of the blessing associated with creation is illustrated by the genealogy of chap. 5, and of the flood blessing by the genealogy of chap. 10. Secondly, there are three instances where man is depicted as striving to reach God (3:5; 6:1-4; 11:1-9). Each time the attempt ends in failure, when God steps in and takes drastic action, thus making it clear that this is not an option open to created man. Thirdly, there are the parallel questions, 'Where are you?' (3:9), and 'Where is your brother?' (4:9), which God puts to man when he fails to make the most of the option that is open to him. Both these episodes end with man being punished by being alienated from God. The blessing of procreation is not, however, withdrawn.

More needs to be said about this option which is an integral part of the story of man's creation. That man is created in the image of God (1:27) may be taken to mean that man is intended for relationship with God.⁸ This intention is brought out in an entirely different way when man is commanded not to eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:16f), since the giving of the command provides man with the opportunity of relationship with the giver of the command; "it belongs to the nature of man to see himself free in face of a command and to relate himself to the one who gives the command by saying yes or no."⁹ This interpretation suggests that the actual content of the command is not important. It is its role of providing freedom, of expressing confidence and at the same time challenge, of creating the possibility of loyalty, that makes it a central feature of the creation story.

When the author of the creation narratives says that it is God who is the one that gives the command, then he is saying that the command has its origin where life has its origin; but at the same time it becomes clear that there must always and everywhere be the possibility of an incomprehensible command. A command is or can be incomprehensible and consequently acceptable only in trust, where the breadth of view of the one who commands is much broader than that of the one who receives the command.¹⁰

That man is called to take responsibility for his answer indicates the seriousness

with which he is taken, and the alienation from God which he experiences as a result of his negative response seems to confirm the view that the command is fundamentally to do with relationship. We note in passing, that the alienation between man and his brother, as depicted in chap. 4, also results from a negative response to an incomprehensible declaration by God, and leads to further alienation between God and man, as well as between men.

Of those Westermann highlights, the first that has particular bearing on our study of Romans and Käsemann's commentary, is the notion that the blessing of the Creator is basically the gift of descendants. This is of particular importance in the story of Abraham, and Paul's use of it. It is in this context that Paul uses the three expressions which Käsemann regards as central to Pauline theology. Paul interprets the Abraham story to mean that, as a man who put his trust in God, Abraham is to be father of Jews and Gentiles, where his fatherhood is to be demonstrated in that his children are those who follow his example of trusting God. The Genesis stories indicate that it was the Creator's intention that all men should trust him. In light of their failure to do this, it could be argued that God's calling of Abraham was with the intention of bringing this about. These actions make it clear that the practice of Judaism is not a necessary part of this process, but rather that Judaism was designed to draw attention to God's purpose of winning the trust of all. We will argue that a major part of Paul's criticism of the Jews is that they misunderstood this, believing the *only* way to demonstrate trust in God was by embracing Judaism. By reference to God as Creator he could therefore argue for the inclusion of Gentiles as children of Abraham, even though they did not take up Jewish practice. On this point we will differ from Käsemann, who sees the major thrust of the Abraham story as supporting the inclusion of Gentiles because justification is by faith, whereas the Jews, he maintains, believed justification was by works.

A second point which has some relevance is the picture of man striving to reach, or be like, God. The result is alienation from God, and fellow men, and becoming victims of their own desires. This connects with Paul's argument in Rom 1:18ff, and Käsemann's argument that man always exists under a lord of some kind, and can never be his own lord. It also affirms Käsemann's contention that, conversely, when one recognizes God as Creator, one's illusions about oneself are shattered.

It also makes sense of words like reconciliation and peace being used in the context of salvation through trust in God, and of the practical demands made on members of the believing congregation to demonstrate the sort of lifestyle consistent with faith in the Creator.

Thirdly, and related to the above, the notion of God's incomprehensible command creating the possibility of relationship and loyalty, has its echoes in Romans. Westermann argues that "the command has its origin where life has its origin", and that "A command is or can be incomprehensible and consequently acceptable only in trust"¹¹. If the former of these statements is true, then it is clear that any understanding of God that relates to this notion, must be absolutely central to human existence. If the latter is true, then Käsemann is thereby confirmed in his insistence that belief in the God who creates out of nothing, justifies the ungodly and resurrects the dead are theologically central, since, as Paul demonstrates with the story of Abraham, faith for Abraham consisted in acting in trust to the logically absurd commands and promises of God, believing him to be the God described by the three statements that Käsemann highlights, statements that indicate God is one who behaves in a way totally incomprehensible to the human mind, and in utter contradiction to human experience and expectation. That it is by this means that God creates the possibility of relationships will, further, be seen to tie in with the notion of righteousness being fundamentally about relationship, a point already indicated by the reverse situation, that failure to accept God's comprehensible commands constitutes a lack of trust, which results in alienation.

Thus far, we have seen that the creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2 form an introduction to the history of God's activity toward Israel, and an introduction to an account of the purpose, potential and nature of man. We turn now to the act of creation itself. The striking feature of Genesis 1 is that God creates by his word: he speaks and it is so. The verb used to describe this creative work, אָרַב , is used exclusively of God. It emphasizes that what is happening here is entirely outside any human capability. The world came into being through the seemingly effortless exercising of a mighty and miraculous power. At the same time, it is a personal and deliberate act. The world did not simply evolve, nor come into being as a more or less accidental result of circumstances. God is

clearly distinct from the world and its processes. The Creator stands over against the created.¹² It is his possession and he has the right of Lordship over the whole of it. The concept is summed up and stated with remarkable impact in Ps 33:9, 'For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood forth.'

Within this context the redactor moves quite comfortably from this to other ways of expressing God's creative activity. These other expressions are vestiges of earlier traditions and myths, and the apparent contradictions are ignored or simply not noticed. Under the overarching statement of Gen 1:1, and the overall structure of the narrative, these discrepancies become insignificant. Thus, in 1:6 God says, 'Let there be a firmament' and then in 1:7 uses the verb פָּתַח , which conveys the idea of producing something by means of labour, to describe the making of the firmament. The same mixing of terms occurs with the making of the sun and moon (1:14f,16f) and the animals (1:24,25), whereas at other points בָּרָא is used (1:21,27).¹³ In Genesis 2 the idea of God forming man as a potter forms clay is conveyed by the verb יָצַק . This, too, points to the distinction between Creator and creation, emphasizing the limitation and dependence of the creature in relation to the will and power of God.

The recognition of this power to create carries with it an acknowledgement that it is also a power which can destroy. In Genesis, this awareness is conveyed in the story of the flood. Elsewhere the possibility is even more obviously connected with the creative power, in that destruction is described as a running down or simple reversal of creation (Ps 102:26-28; 104:29; Dt 32:39; Job 34:14f).

The statement of Gen 1:1 takes precedence over other images when the question of *creatio ex nihilo* is raised. The descriptions in 1:2 and 2:4ff, which set the scene for the narratives, are to be seen not as an indication of pre-existent matter, but as an attempt to convey a picture of complete contrast to what is to be, to use concrete terms to give an image of nothingness.¹⁴ Technical dogmatic or scientific questions do not concern the writer and ought not to be asked of the text. The point is that in the beginning God was and the created world was not. Both this situation and the process by which the created world came to be are humanly inconceivable. Only the logical absurdity of God calling forth and commanding what does not exist is adequate to communicate the magnitude of the miracle of

existence.

This image of God creating by his word confirms the interpretation of Rom 4:17b as a reference to creation, and hence as a genuine calling into existence, albeit as a calling as if there were something to call. There certainly seems no reason to imagine that Rom 4:17b suggests that things are being called what they are not. This is important, too, for understanding the idea of God justifying the ungodly because, if these expressions truly are parallel, the idea that the ungodly are simply treated *as if* they were just, would appear to be excluded.

The idea that this picture, of God calling the world into existence by his word, demonstrates that he is distinct from his creation, and that it is his possession, is consistent with Käsemann's emphasis on Lordship. That it is a personal and deliberate act of will makes sense of God's ongoing endeavours to bring about his original purpose, that this is fundamentally to do with relationship, and that God withholds his power to destroy, even though he has every reason not to, as is suggested by the statement in Gen 2:16f.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall die."

At the same time, the demonstration of man's limitation and utter dependence on his Creator, as communicated by the image of God moulding him from clay, also indicates that to deny that dependence ought to result in death, though, as Paul shows in Rom 1:18ff, the immediate result is actually alienation from God and dependence on lesser gods, or idols, leading to alienation and disharmony and immorality amongst men in everyday life. This again is consistent with Käsemann's emphasis on man always being under some Lordship or another, it being beyond his in-built limitations to be able to depend on himself. This, in turn, ties in with the argument that a man cannot be justified by works.

Probably the most important aspect of the Genesis view of creation, however, is that in this exercising of power God reveals himself as one who acts in a way entirely beyond human capability—so much so that the very idea is beyond

human conception, and can be expressed only as the logical absurdity of *creatio ex nihilo*. For Paul, and Käsemann, this means he is a God that one can never aspire to emulate, never be in a position to lay claims upon, but is only to be trusted, even though it is the very absurdity that demands trust, which makes trust so difficult or pointless.

In summary, anticipating more detailed exposition of the notion of creation in Romans, we could say that it would appear that both the implications, and centrality of the concept of God as him who calls into existence that which does not exist, as it is presented in Genesis, is in complete harmony with Paul's use of the concept in Romans. This account, then, would seem to support our thesis that Käsemann is right in asserting that this concept is central to Paul's theology. It also affirms our conviction that Paul's theology is fundamentally an affirmation of Jewish beliefs, when they are rightly understood.

Deutero-Isaiah

The presentation of the concept of God as Creator takes a somewhat different form, and serves a different purpose, in Deutero-Isaiah. This work is written for Israel in exile, in a situation where confidence in Yahweh had been shattered in light of his apparent impotence in the face of Israel's enemies. Defeated and exiled, the disillusioned Israelites appear to have been questioning both the ability and the willingness of their God to help them. The prophet seeks to demonstrate to his people that, despite appearances, it is indeed Yahweh, and not the gods of the heathen, who controls history, and that the people have every reason to look to him with hope. For both these purposes he makes extensive use of the creation tradition, developing it so that it speaks directly to the situation. In this respect, Paul has something in common with Deutero-Isaiah, since we maintain he, too, takes the central theological notion of creation and modifies or develops it so that it speaks to the situation he is addressing. As in Genesis, creation is regarded in Deutero-Isaiah as the starting point of history, the first of Yahweh's saving acts within history. The predominant verb for creation is again *ברא*¹⁵, but again a variety of images is used to describe Yahweh's activity in creating the natural world¹⁶. The limitation and dependence of man¹⁷, the effortlessness for

the all powerful Yahweh to carry out his acts of creation, and his unique right to praise from, and Lordship over, this world and its people, which were created by his personal and deliberate choice, are all clearly conveyed¹⁸. Reference is also made to his ability to destroy as readily as to create, and thus to his control over the preservation or destruction of mankind and the whole world¹⁹.

It is, however, the use made of this belief that Yahweh is Creator, that is of particular interest in Deutero-Isaiah. The prophet reminds his hearers of God's creative activity, then argues from this that Yahweh has equal power and authority over the events of history. In this he includes both the past and the present, and from there argues that Yahweh will likewise direct the future. This argument is set out in general terms in 40:12-17, 21-24, 27-31. Because of this the prophet can say that it is Yahweh, the Creator, who orders the activities of the heathen king, Cyrus.²⁰ But the clinching evidence for Yahweh's Lordship over history comes from the image of him creating by his word. It is not only that at his word the world was created, and at his word princes and nations rise and fall, but that he has predicted what will happen, or, in other words, he declares in advance what he will do.²¹ As von Rad puts it,

the pivot on which his whole preaching turns is an awareness of the reality of God's creative word. At the time of his call a voice from heaven pointed him to the word of Yahweh, which 'stands' forever. . . . Indeed, Deutero-Isaiah sees the whole business of world history from the viewpoint of its correspondence with a previously spoken prophetic word. . . . In fact, Deutero-Isaiah puts in bold relief the question of who is the controller of world history, and the answer he gives almost takes one's breath away—the Lord of history is he who can allow the future to be told in advance.²²

This would appear to be a development of the Genesis view of creation as an event in history, for Deutero-Isaiah seems to say that if it is true, then its converse is true: events in history are acts of creation. Thus creation is an ongoing process. This idea is clearly stated in 45:7, 'I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe, I am the Lord, who do all these things.'²³

In thus establishing that Yahweh is indeed Lord of history, Deutero-Isaiah provides reassurance regarding Yahweh's *ability* to help Israel. That he is *willing* to

help requires an argument centering on his relationship to Yahweh in particular. The prophet's approach is to apply his conclusions about Yahweh's ongoing creative activity in history to Israel. He speaks of the past events of their salvation history, referring to the exodus from Egypt (43:16f) and the calling of Abraham (41:8), which they regarded as their beginning as a nation, as their creation. It is on the basis of this, and above all because of this, that his statements about present and future salvation are made.²⁴ Because of his understanding of Yahweh's creative word, he can even speak of future salvation as if it had already taken place.²⁵ This link between creation and salvation, God's creative activity as redemptive activity, is most concisely expressed in 44:24, As Westermann sees it,

In 44:24 God is designated in one and the same breath as Israel's Creator and her redeemer. As has often been noticed, the collocation is frequent in Deutero-Isaiah, and it can be understood only in the light of Israel's praise; it echoes the polarity described above: Israel's redeemer is the God of majesty who created the world and who directs the entire course of history. God's work in creation and his work in redemption are here looked on as very closely connected: however this must never be taken as meaning that, in whole or in part, the two merge, for that would be a misconception of what the prophet had in mind. He used this polarity to make his hearers remember that God's saving action upon his chosen people as proclaimed by himself was, as it were, an island within the mighty universe of God's work as Creator. It is therefore no accident that the combination, Israel's Creator and her redeemer, most of all occurs in the promises of salvation (43:1, 15; 44:21, 24; 54:5; also 45:11; 51:13).²⁶

This statement is helpful in bringing out the relation between Yahweh's roles as Creator, controller of world history and saviour of Israel, but Westermann's reasons for insisting that these aspects nevertheless remain distinct is not entirely clear. It almost seems as if he is suggesting that the prophet brings these ideas together to make a point, but does not really mean what he says.

In contrast to this is an article by Rendtorff²⁷, in which he argues that the roles are inseparable. In 43:1-7, Yahweh introduces himself as Israel's Creator, then immediately says, 'Fear not', promises salvation, then concludes with a further reference to creation. There is a similarly sharp transition from creation

to salvation in 44:2, "Thus says the Lord who made you . . . and will help you". In this verse, not only is the sharp transition repeated, but the order is reversed. This suggests that the two themes are so merged that the expressions are interchangeable. The order is immaterial because the prophet is no longer speaking of two separate ideas.²⁸ Finally, Rendtorff comments,

On the contrary, in 44:2-5 this coexistence (*Nebeneinander*) had broken through even in the introduction. In the following salvation oracle itself separation is no longer possible: Yahweh's saving activity consists in the fact that he establishes himself as Creator, by creating anew the destroyed and the dead. Thus Yahweh's creative activity takes place *now*, indeed it is immediately present and is in no way merely past history. When this happens Yahweh works the salvation of his people. A more complete merging of creation faith and salvation faith is inconceivable.²⁹

Rendtorff similarly points to the parallelism between creation and election statements³⁰ and concludes that the statements 'I have called you' and 'I have created you' are simply different ways of expressing the same event.³¹ This combination of the development of the concept of creation to include not merely past but also present and future divine activity, with the development of regarding election and salvation as creation, enables Deutero-Isaiah to reassure Israel that Yahweh will help them. In Rendtorff's words,

The present and still imminent saving activity of this God for his people consists however not only in close relationship to his wholly personal creating and electing action in the past but it exactly coincides with it. It is not only the same God, who then and now acts, but it is *one* act of God, which happens ever and again and to which Israel owes its existence and its salvation.³²

On the basis of this, the imminent salvation that Israel is to hope for, that is, release from captivity, can be spoken of as new creation. Just as the calling of the patriarchs³³, and especially the freeing of his people from bondage in Egypt³⁴, are regarded as acts in which Yahweh created Israel, so in freeing them from bondage in Babylon, he will recreate them. This is particularly clear in 43:16-21, where

the release from captivity is a new exodus intricately accompanied by creative acts in the physical world as well.³⁵ The former things³⁶ (43:19)³⁶ ought not to be the focus of Israel's faith, but merely pointers to the new things (43:19)³⁷ about to take place, for which future generations will give praise (43:21).³⁸

Two further concepts associated with creation in the Genesis accounts ought also to be mentioned here. The first is the element of incomprehensibility. Deutero-Isaiah asks Israel to believe the seemingly impossible fact that Yahweh's relationship with Israel is intimately bound up with his relationship to the heathen. Not only does he employ the services of the heathen to carry out his purpose for Israel,³⁹ but also his saving of Israel is intended to bring all nations to recognize him. In the course of contemporary events, the heathen shall be put to shame⁴⁰ and turn to Yahweh through Israel's witness,⁴¹ or through their observation of Israel's salvation.⁴²

In addition, the prophet declares that Yahweh is actually pained to see the plight of his people, and cares for those who have lost heart.⁴³ He calls on them to believe that Yahweh has finished his judgement upon them and forgiven them.⁴⁴ Above all, he tells them Yahweh can and will act in a way which is quite beyond anything Israel could reasonably hope for,⁴⁵ bringing about incredible reversals in the normal course of human experience.⁴⁶ For those who 'wait for the Lord' this will be a positive transformation from weakness to strength, though "there is no thought of such waiting being praised as a possibility open to human initiative: the only praise is of the transforming divine act which makes the paradox possible."⁴⁷

This leads to the second concept which emerges from our discussion of Genesis, that of *creatio ex nihilo*, since this passage suggests that the re-creation of Israel is effectively a creation out of nothing. Further, just as the defeat of Israel's enemies can be described as making them as nothing,⁴⁸ so the raising up of the defeated Israelites would amount to creation of a nation which was at that time as nothing. Another example of this aspect of Yahweh's creative ability is the promised flowering of the wilderness at the time of the new exodus,⁴⁹ or the bringing forth of offspring from barren wombs.⁵⁰ In more general terms, any thought that anything existed before Yahweh is dispelled by the declaration, 'I

am the first and the last'⁵¹. The most decisive expression of *creatio ex nihilo*, however, is, as in Genesis, the overall picture of creation taking place at the word of Yahweh.⁵²

2.1.2 The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

We turn now to some of the literature of later Judaism, in order to see what sort of understanding of God as Creator existed nearer the time of Paul, and might have been familiar to him. The writings of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha have frequent references to God's creative activity. As in the Old Testament, however, these do not occur as doctrinal statements or arguments about how the notion is to be conceived, but occur simply as axioms, more or less taken for granted, on which discussions and arguments about contemporary questions or situations are based.

Amongst the variety of images for creation occurring in the Old Testament, the dominant one is that of creation by God's word. This is conveyed indirectly by descriptions of him calling, summoning or commanding in order to bring various elements of the universe into being, and to take their place in the ongoing processes of nature.⁵³ More striking, however, is the clear declaration that it was by his word that God created. In 4 Ezra 4:38-54, the Genesis 1 account of creation is retold in a way which highlights this: 'And I said: O Lord, of a truth thou didst speak at the beginning of the creation upon the first day, saying: Let heaven and earth be made!' and thy word perfected thy work. . . . as soon as thy word went forth the work was done.' (vv.38, 43).⁵⁴ In addition, the *creatio ex nihilo* which was inferred from this picture in the Old Testament is given explicit expression in the writings of the Apocrypha: 'God did not make [heaven and earth] out of things that existed' 2 Macc 7:21-24 but 'called from the beginning of the world that which did not yet exist' (S. Baruch 21:4). The full force of the absurdity of this picture is conveyed in S. Baruch 48:8:

And with a word thou quickenest that which was not
And with mighty power thou holdest that which has not yet come.

The idea of *creatio ex nihilo* is also expressed in an interesting way in 2 Macc 7:21-24, where conception and development in the womb is a creation out of nothing, which will be repeated for the martyrs who, in giving their lives for their faith, are said to count themselves as nothing. In other words, the formation of a human being is a creation out of nothing, and the re-formation, or resurrection, of one who dies for his faith, can be regarded as a re-birth, and, in parallel with birth, as a re-creation out of nothing.

The God who creates by his word is the incomparable Lord.⁵⁵ If things which do not exist obey his command and come into being,⁵⁶ how much more ought he to be worshipped and served by his creation.⁵⁷ He has full knowledge to the utmost limits of time and space,⁵⁸ and preservation or destruction is in his hands.⁵⁹ In comparison with him, man and his knowledge are as nothing,⁶⁰ although some knowledge of him can be had from observing his works of creation.⁶¹

These assertions about the Creator God form the background against which questions about the future of the world, and especially Israel, are raised and discussed. It was believed that faith in the Creator separated Israel from the Gentiles, that the law was given to maintain them as a distinct nation,⁶² and that as long as the law was kept, God would preserve them as his chosen nation.⁶³ It was even believed that the world was created for Israel's sake.⁶⁴ In light of this belief, Israel was bewildered by two interrelated aspects of its experience. One was its own long and continuing history of ungodliness, of failure to live as God intended or to keep the law.⁶⁵ The other was its experience of oppression at the hands of the heathen nations. Although punishment was undoubtedly due to them, to suffer under the even more ungodly heathen nations was particularly galling,⁶⁶ and also meant that the righteous suffered along with the unrighteous. So they appeal to the love and mercy of their Creator God, who chose them, and before whose greatness they are helpless and as nothing.⁶⁷

Unlike Deutero-Isaiah, the writers of the Apocrypha saw no hope of this situation being resolved within history. They concluded that evil had been implanted from the beginning⁶⁸ and could not be overcome. In parallel with the hope held by the Maccabean martyrs for a new life, it was believed that the only hope was for God to bring the present world to an end and start again with a renewal of

creation.⁶⁹ This would be a total renewal of all that was, both heaven and earth. The present world would be as nothing and would pass away and be forgotten, the whole earth would be sanctified, and there should be a complete reversal of the present order.⁷⁰

If thou survive thou shalt see, and if thou livest long thou shalt marvel; for the age is hastening fast to its end.

Because it is unable to bear the things promised in their season to the righteous; for this age is full of sorrow and impotence. (4 Ezra 4:26)

As this quotation indicates, the writers thought in terms of two ages, that of the present world and that of the new world, which would be eternal.⁷¹ At the conclusion of the present age there would be a judgement⁷² and the ungodly would be destroyed or would suffer torment,⁷³ while the righteous who had remained faithful and had kept the law would begin to live as they were created to live, as a holy nation.⁷⁴ This hope was read back into the past, as an unwritten law constituting the promise to Abraham,⁷⁵ and it was therefore expected that the righteous who had already died, or who would die before the end of the age, would be preserved in death until the new world came into being.⁷⁶ Only at that time would it be known whom God judged to be righteous.⁷⁷

Clearly here, as in the Old Testament, there is an inextricable link between creation and salvation: the anticipated act of salvation is to be an act of creation. The linking of these with world history, however, appears to have disappeared. Salvation seems possible only if history is abandoned altogether, and the idea of continuing creative salvific acts is replaced by a hope for a final, once for all, act of creation.

2.1.3 Josephus and Philo

Josephus

The historian, Josephus, also speaks of God as Creator. 'The universe is in God's hands; perfect and blessed, self-sufficing and sufficing for all, he is the beginning, the middle, and the end of all things.'⁷⁸ He may be seen in his works, but a complete picture of him is beyond description or imagination, and ought not to be conjectured. One ought simply to worship the God who created, 'not with hands, not with toil, not with assistants of whom he had no need'⁷⁹ but simply by his will. As in other writings, Josephus makes a connection between God's activity as Creator and his special relationship with Israel, in that he is addressed

as father and source of the universe, as Creator of things human and divine, with which he had adorned himself, and as the protector and guardian of the Hebrew race and of its prosperity and of the kingdom which he had given them.⁸⁰

This, then, is further evidence that the Jewish belief in God as Creator was a belief in *creatio ex nihilo* by an incomparable God who, as Creator, was saviour of the people of Israel whom he had established.

Philo

The Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, has an understanding of God as Creator which appears to be based much more on his understanding of Greek philosophy, than on the Jewish understanding of salvation history. Thus, while affirming the world has a maker, who is entirely distinct from the world, and ought to be acknowledged as such, his belief is derived from the idea of there being a transcendent, unoriginate first cause,⁸¹ rather than from Israel's experience. Keeping the law is not so much a means of participating in the salvation offered to a chosen nation, as an indication of how to live in harmony with the world.⁸²

Although Philo speaks in a number of places of God bringing the non-existent into existence,⁸³ he also says that matter is a necessary component in creation. In *De Cherubim* 125-127, he quotes the argument of Empedocles, that there are four factors which operate conjointly to bring something into existence: cause, material, instrument and purpose. The universe is brought into existence *by* God, *from* the four elements (water, air, fire, earth), *through* the word of God, *for* his goodness. It may be that Philo is inconsistent at this point, or it may be that he in some sense thought of the 'non-existent' as material, in much the same way as we found the Genesis writers had to use a picture of something concrete in order to try to get across the notion of absolute nothingness. On the other hand, in *De Specialibus Legibus* 4,187, Philo says,

He called the non-existent into existence and produced order from disorder, qualities from things devoid of quality, similarities from dissimilarities, identities from the totally different, fellowship and harmony from the dissociated and discordant, equality from inequality and light from darkness. For he and his beneficent powers ever make it their business to transmute the faultiness of the worse wherever it exists and convert it to the better.

This passage appears to fit with the interpretation put forward in the above discussion of the Old Testament and Apocryphal writings, that acts of God by which he radically reverses the existing order, making something entirely new out of what was as good as nothing, may be regarded as a form of *creatio ex nihilo*. In fact, Philo goes so far as to suggest that God always acts in this way, that it is in effect part of who God is, that he should always exercise his power to bring about these radical reversals of the negative to something positive.

2.1.4 The Qumran Writings

Another source of at least one branch of Jewish thought near the time of Paul is the literature of the Qumran community. Discussion here will be limited to the Hymns (1QH) where most of the references to God as Creator occur. In these, the traditional faith in the God who created all and is Lord over all is specifically applied to the concerns of the community member. This is a noticeable shift

from the approach in the other writings considered, where the focus is on the relationship of the Creator to Israel as a whole.

A brief look at the argument presented in the first hymn should suffice to indicate the main aspects of the role of the concept of creation, since all the hymns which make reference to it take up much the same themes. The first few lines of this hymn are lost, but the last line of the opening section declares,

Thou art long-suffering in thy judgements
and righteous in all thy deeds.

This is immediately followed by a statement about God's creative activity,

By thy wisdom all things exist from eternity,
and before creating them thou knewest their works
for ever and ever.
Nothing is done without thee
and nothing is known unless thou desire it.

A number of examples are then given: the spirits, the heavens and heavenly bodies, the natural elements, the earth and seas and their inhabitants were all made and appointed their place and function according to the Creator's will. The role of man and his ways and destiny were also established before he came into existence. This section is then concluded with the same assertion with which it began,

All things exist according to thy will
and without thee nothing is done.

The community member declares that knowledge of these things comes to him as a gift from God. By reference to the image of man being made from clay, he shows how this must be so. As clay he is sinful and ignorant, whereas God the Creator knows all things, and is alone righteous. It is God who puts in men's mouths the words that tell of his glory. He strengthens men and purifies them of

their sins so that they may tell of his great works. The hymn concludes with a passage in which the community member tells of the divisive effect of his message of the glory of God. Those who rebel against this knowledge reject him who tells it, to their doom, while those who accept it see him as a source of inspiration.

The hymn to the Creator, unlike the Old Testament writings, shows little interest in the act of creation itself, or in the Creator's involvement in the history of the world or of Israel. Rather, the writer appears to want simply to emphasize the greatness of God and the complete dependence of the creation on him.

His greatness lies in his complete foreknowledge and control of everything that happens.⁸⁴ This suggests that his creative activity is not seen as being limited to the past, but as continuous.⁸⁵ His Lordship is absolute, and there is none comparable to him.⁸⁶ The effortlessness with which he creates and appoints the place and purpose of every created thing emphasizes his great power.⁸⁷ As in the Old Testament, the verb נָתַן is used to convey this. That it is by his wisdom⁸⁸ that he does this, indicates that creation is personal and deliberate activity. Its ultimate purpose is to witness to the will, power and glory of the Creator.⁸⁹

The Creator's knowledge and control of all things also indicates the dependence of the creation on him. Without him nothing is done.⁹⁰ This dependence is particularly emphasized in relation to man. Not only are his role, tasks, ways and destiny foreordained,⁹¹ but without God he is utterly powerless, a helpless victim of his ignorance⁹² and sin⁹³. The writer makes use of the Genesis 2 picture of man being made (נָתַן) from clay⁹⁴ to emphasize this point. Man's only hope of rescue from his plight, his hope of salvation, lies in the Creator who, by right of being Creator, is God of knowledge⁹⁵ and of righteousness⁹⁶. To those destined for salvation, God reveals knowledge of himself⁹⁷ and provides words by which they may tell of his greatness and praise him.⁹⁸ Likewise, he rescues and purifies them from their sin,⁹⁹ again so they may be able to show his greatness.¹⁰⁰ In addition, he provides them with strength in the face of conflict with the ungodly.¹⁰¹ Thus, as in other writings discussed, there is a merging of God's activity as Creator and as redeemer.

Salvation seems to be seen on two levels in these documents, though the dis-

tion is not always clearly maintained. Entry into the community, with the accompanying revelation and purification mentioned above, appears to constitute present salvation¹⁰² within this world, since community members live a life of righteousness reckoned to be impossible for mankind in general. That the community member is contrasted with man made of clay, suggests that the transformation experienced may be regarded as a new creation of each individual,¹⁰³ though the term 'new creation' is not specifically used.¹⁰⁴ This salvation, however, is a preliminary to an apocalyptic salvation event, for a final great battle against ungodliness is anticipated. The present conflict with those outside the community¹⁰⁵ is a sign, or the beginning, of the coming wrath of God. At the time of its coming, the righteous will join God in a war that will result in the elimination of evil and all who practise it.¹⁰⁶ Unlike the Apocryphal writings, the Qumran hymns do not speak of a new creation of the world.¹⁰⁷ While the radical change of circumstances for the ungodly, namely their destruction, is stressed, it would appear that no marked discontinuity between present community life and life after the end-time was anticipated. It was simply assumed that the present salvation would be eternal.¹⁰⁸

2.2 The God who Creates out of Nothing as a Unifying Theme in Romans

We now turn to the Letter to the Romans in order to see what role is played there by the concept of God as Creator, as him who calls into existence the things that do not exist. In particular, we wish to test the hypothesis that this concept is a central theme of Pauline theology. In so doing, we take the first step towards evaluating the validity of Käsemann's assertion that "creation, resurrection, and justification declare in fact one and the same divine action"¹⁰⁹ and as such constitute the centre of Pauline theology.

In order to do this, we propose to work through the epistle from the beginning, outlining the argument¹¹⁰ and highlighting the points where it would appear that the concept of God specifically as Creator is present. Since we take it that this letter is written to speak to a particular historical situation, our analysis of the argument will inevitably involve an attempt to isolate what this might have been.

So as to avoid losing sight of our goal, detailed discussion will be limited to those passages which appear to be relevant to these two areas.

1:1-7

The letter opens, with an unusually long prescript, in which Paul introduces himself and his gospel. This may reasonably be attributed to the fact that he was unknown personally, at least to the majority of the community in Rome. It may also reflect the importance attached to the community, because of its being the imperial capital, or because of Paul's concern to win support for his further ventures, though it is not like Paul to concern himself greatly with public opinion. It would seem more likely that his main concern is to indicate on what authority he is writing to them, and to point towards his message for them.

Paul's opening designation of his message, the 'gospel of God', is thought to be a pre-Pauline formula and, as such, a means of establishing common ground with the Roman Christians. It is unlikely, however, that Paul chose the formula arbitrarily. Rather, its content should be seen to point to the situation to which he is writing¹¹¹. In establishing common ground, he is not simply "commending his Christian orthodoxy"¹¹² but showing, without compromising his own position, that he is in sympathy with his audience in the particular area in which the debate is to be conducted.

The distinctive feature of this formula is that it emphasizes the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. Firstly, the gospel is grounded in the Old Testament, specifically related to God's promises to his people. This affirms the importance of Judaism for the gospel and, at the same time, validates the gospel from the point of view of Judaism. Secondly, the gospel is about God's Son, 'who was descended from David according to the flesh'. The implication is that the person of whom the gospel speaks is the Messiah, long awaited by the Jews. This again stresses the essential role of Judaism but simultaneously makes, from the Jewish point of view, the highest possible claim for this person.

Thirdly, this person, 'the Messiah' was 'designated Son of God in power accord-

ing to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead'. There are a number of exegetical difficulties. Points debated include the exact meaning of *ὀρισθέντος*; the roles played by *ἐν δυνάμει, κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιοσύνης* and *ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν*; the meaning of the term *πνεῦμα ἁγιοσύνης*. The idea that it is specifically in association with his resurrection that Jesus becomes the Son of God is doctrinally difficult as it appears to contradict the idea of the two natures of the earthly Jesus and of his pre-existence, elsewhere asserted by Paul. The difficulty can be overcome if *ὀρισθέντος* is translated 'shown to be' but this goes against the normal usage of the word. It also interrupts the flow of the argument of the formula and weakens its impact. If it is accepted that this formulation is pre-Pauline, and that our exegesis is not to be determined by later doctrinal positions, then *ὀρισθέντος* can be taken to mean 'appointed' or 'instituted'.

The structure of the formula also assists in determining the relationships between the various elements of this third declaration. The temporal movement suggests that *ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν* marks the point in time when this appointment was made, rather than the ground for it. That this event involved an act of power cannot be doubted. However, this is adequately conveyed if *κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιοσύνης* is understood causally. Then *ἐν δυνάμει* can be seen to qualify *υιοῦ θεοῦ*, thus further sharpening the designation of this person who forms the content of the gospel. If this is correct, then *πνεῦμα ἁγιοσύνης* is best understood as a pre-Pauline name for the Holy Spirit. The usage here is distinctive in that it operates on Jesus, rather than under his direction, but the similar usage in Rom 8:11, *τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐλείφαντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν νεκρῶν*, confirms our interpretation.

With this statement the formula reaches its climax. At the time of his resurrection, this descendant of David became Son of God, through the action of the Holy Spirit. As such he shares the nature of God, in particular, his power. Thus the gospel remains firmly rooted in the Jewish tradition in that it is defined in terms of its relationship to the God of the Jews. On the other hand, the claim made thereby is so outrageous from a Jewish viewpoint, that there can be no doubt that a Jew who believes this is assenting to a radically new understanding. Paul's concluding 'Jesus Christ our Lord' reminds the Christians to whom he is

writing that they have in fact acknowledged this claim to be true.

If we rightly understood the thrust of this designation of the gospel, and can assume that it was carefully chosen by Paul, then it would seem reasonable to postulate that in this letter, in marked distinction from his others, Paul is addressing a community with at least a significant number of Jewish Christians. In that case, ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν in 1:5 is best translated as 'in all the nations'. The unusual designation of the community as τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, rather than τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ¹¹³, would also be particularly meaningful to Jewish recipients, in that, as Käsemann points out, "In OT terminology the beloved of God are the elect, who are sure of this in their calling."¹¹⁴ The emphasis on 'call' (1:1,6-7), and the terms 'servant of Jesus Christ' and 'gospel of God' may also indicate an attempt to speak particularly of people of Jewish background. At the same time, the emphatic πασῶν in 1:5,7, along with our interpretation of 1:3f, suggests also a significant number of Gentile Christians, the implication being that there was conflict between the two groups.¹¹⁵

A strong argument against this conjecture that the Roman community consisted of both Jewish and Gentile Christians is that Paul had agreed to be apostle to the Gentiles, and therefore would have been overstepping the limits of his agreement with the Jerusalem apostles if he wrote to and visited such a congregation. We suggest, however, that Paul was doing just that, and that it is this that is behind his strong emphasis on his authority¹¹⁶ and the unusually careful and rather tentative justification for the letter (1:8-15)¹¹⁷. The 'including yourselves' in 1:6 can thus be seen as an anticipation of an objection on these grounds.

There are three pointers to the possible nature of conflict within the community. The first is the formula in 1:3f. If our interpretation is correct, then it would appear that the Gentiles were undervaluing the importance of Judaism, and the Jews overvaluing it, or at least undervaluing the force of the gospel. The second is Paul's description of his task as apostle, 'to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations' (1:5). The meaning of the genitive construction εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως is not obvious from the context. We take it that it will become clearer as Paul sets about this task in the course of the letter. At this stage, therefore, we wish only to suggest that the two words indicate that

the problem to which Paul addresses himself revolves around these two factors, faith and obedience. The third pointer to the situation is Paul's reminder to the Romans that they are 'called to belong to Jesus Christ' (1:7), suggesting that for some reason they had lost sight of this aspect of the faith.

We come now to the question of whether the concept of God as Creator plays any role in this opening section. Clearly there is no specific mention of this, but Paul uses a number of terms which, as we have seen in our discussion of this theme, are integrally related to it. The calling of Paul, and the Romans, can be seen as a reference to God's creative word. The call is not simply a request or demand, but a creative act which makes Paul an apostle and the Romans members of Jesus Christ, or saints, just as the calling of Israel constituted its creation as a nation, according to Deutero-Isaiah. A similar idea is conveyed by the use of the term 'servant'¹¹⁸. In addition, as we saw in our discussion of Genesis 1 and 2, the question of obedience lies at the heart of the story of creation. Obedience is the key to relationship between man and his Creator, for which man, as image of God, was intended.

Most striking, however, is that as Son of God, Jesus Christ had qualities and rights normally ascribed uniquely to God as Creator.¹¹⁹ He is Son of God 'in power'. Paul is his 'servant'. It is through him that Paul receives 'grace and apostleship', or, in other words, is created and equipped for his task.¹²⁰ The 'obedience of faith' is 'for the sake of his name'.¹²¹ Above all, he is 'Lord', and the Romans are called to belong to him. This common nature between Creator and Son is summed up in the final blessing (1:7) where they together bestow the fundamental gifts of grace and peace. That Paul uses this blessing in the prescript to every letter suggests that this relationship, specifically emphasized in this prescript, is always presupposed by Paul, and is not simply of importance for the particular situation in Rome.

1:8-17

Having set the scene theologically, Paul, in 1:8-15, explains the reason for his letter and his proposed journey to Rome. As noted above, this is very carefully

formulated and remarkably defensive. Käsemann¹²² may well be right in attributing this to the dispute over his claim to be an apostle, which is apparent in so much of his writing. In his other letters, however, he boldly affirms his authority as apostle to the Gentiles. That he is here writing to Jews as well as Gentiles would well explain this change in attitude. On the basis of this, we choose to translate 1:13b 'in order that I may reap some harvest amongst you as well as amongst the rest of the nations'. This translation is supported by 1:14 where he makes it clear that he has never been hindered by the normal divisions amongst men, and will not be so hindered in Rome either:

As a messenger of the gospel he can uninhibitedly stride across the conventions and prejudices of the divided cosmos. The wise do not frighten him, and he is equally at home with the foolish. The whole world stand open to him, insofar as he is a servant of the Kyrios.¹²³

Thus in 1:16f he declares he is 'not ashamed of the gospel'. His gospel is not an inferior version intended only for Gentiles, but is effective for 'everyone who has faith' and, in fact, 'to the Jew first', being grounded in Judaism, as we have seen, as well as 'to the Greek' (1:16).

With 1:16f we come to the climax of the introduction in which Paul sets out the significance of this gospel which speaks of a son of David who has become Son of God, and makes the first step towards elaborating its meaning. How this meaning is to be interpreted is much debated. We do not wish at this stage to involve ourselves in this debate, but simply to point to the role played by the concept of God as Creator, and hope that the ensuing discussion of the letter may throw light on how these verses might best be understood.

There are two concepts here which have been important in our study of creation. The first is 'power'. That the gospel is 'the power of God for salvation' must surely mean that the gospel as such constitutes a creative act of God. The gospel creates salvation. But more than that, receiving the gospel means receiving the creative power of God, which can scarcely be differentiated from receiving God himself, since he alone is Creator, according to the Old Testament¹²⁴. As Käsemann puts it, "it is in reality God himself who enters the earthly sphere in what he grants to us".¹²⁵ To be saved is to receive the divine nature.

The second concept which we can associate directly with creation is the promise of life. In Genesis we learn that he who says 'no' to the Creator's command will die. Now we learn that being righteous by faith is in some sense equivalent to saying 'yes' to the command. This suggests that there is a close parallel between the obedience of faith (1:5) and righteousness by faith. It also implies that 'he who is righteous by faith' will enter into the intended relationship with God, as his image. When we relate this to our interpretation of the gospel as power, it would appear that being the image of God means sharing the divine nature.¹²⁶

1:18-32

With 1:18 Paul begins to elaborate his message. The *γάρ* here relates to the whole of 1:16f. What follows explains how the gospel is the power of God for salvation, how it reveals the righteousness of God, why it is for the Jew first and also the Greek, and above all, why faith must play such a central role for everyone.

1:18-32 is generally regarded as being addressed primarily to Gentiles, though implicitly including the Jews as well.¹²⁷ That the nature of the sins listed, especially idolatry and sexual perversions, seems to be more specifically Gentile, and that Paul goes on to speak directly to the Jewish situation, encourage this view. We suggest, however, that Paul does not make even this much of a concession to the Jews. The gospel is for all, the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and wickedness of men. The apocalyptic tradition concerns itself with ungodliness and wickedness within Judaism, as does Qumran, and it is also a significant Old Testament theme. Thus it seems more likely that this section quite directly addresses both Jew and Gentile. As a revelation of the gospel, it speaks to all who receive the gospel.¹²⁸

The meaning of 1:18 is spelled out in the verses that follow. The wrath of God is the wrath of the Creator. The creation bears witness to him, in particular, to his 'eternal power and deity' and thus, as we have seen, to his unique right to Lordship over his creation.¹²⁹ The fundamental truth that man should acknowledge is that the Creator is Lord, to be honoured, thanked, worshipped, served and

blessed for ever. But man chooses not to do this. Rather than acknowledge God, he seeks to be equal with him, 'claiming to be wise' (v.22).¹³⁰ He raises himself and the whole creation to the status of God, and worships and serves it, rather than its Creator. In thus choosing to live in relationship with, and under the Lordship of, the creation, man gives up his intended image of God, and takes on instead the image of the creation, which, without God, is chaos and as good as nothing. Thus, what Paul describes here closely parallels what is described pictorially in Genesis. Man's attempts to reach God end in failure. His rejection of God's command amounts to a refusal to acknowledge his Lordship. The result is alienation from God, and brother, and a complete breakdown in human relationships.¹³¹

Thus Paul depicts the wrath of God not as divine emotion, but as the converse of his creative power.¹³² When man chooses to reject or escape the Creator's claim to Lordship, the Creator allows him to do so, and to become what he wants. Instead he exercises his rightful claim in judgement. As Käsemann points out, it is only in the gospel that it is revealed that the ungodliness and wickedness that men experience are in themselves God's judgement and not, as apparently thought in the earlier traditions, particularly in the Apocrypha and Qumran writings, the reasons for God's wrath.

Wanting to escape God's deity, but unable to do so, [man] experiences it . . . , with the gospel, as the wrath of the final Judge directed against him.¹³³

The final judgement, as envisaged by the Apocryphal writers, and clearly by Paul¹³⁴, is then the ultimate and irreversible culmination of this ongoing judgement. Man already knows that those who behave in the way described deserve to die (1:32). He knows that disobedience incurs the death penalty (Gen 2:17;3:3).¹³⁵ What he does not realize, without the revelation of the gospel, is that he cannot escape judgement by seeking to live a morally good life and so please God. He is already under judgement. The converse of this would seem to be that man can escape or reverse this judgement only by acknowledging and submitting to the Creator's Lordship. Morally good life would then be a consequence of, rather than a means to, restored relationship with God.

2:1-11

The next section, 2:1-11, could equally be addressed to both Jewish and Gentile Christians in that it speaks to man, whoever he is, and reminds him of the coming final judgement. The warning against judging others suggests that each group was in some way judging the other, while feeling secure in its own salvation, irrespective of its moral behaviour; the Gentiles because they were Christians, the Jews because of their election and their possession of the law. In view of what follows, however, especially 2:17-24, and the close parallel between 2:4 and Wisdom 15:1ff, it is very likely that Paul had the Jews particularly in mind. Thus we conclude that the Jewish Christians in Rome were being critical of the moral behaviour of their Gentile brothers. and probably, on that basis, questioning the validity of Gentile Christianity. That Paul, in condemning this attitude, also leaves the Gentiles in no doubt about the serious consequences of improper conduct, supports the idea that Paul also had his Gentile readers very much in mind.¹³⁶

The references to God as Creator in this passage are limited to his role as eschatological judge. Paul argues that those who judge others for their improper conduct also judge themselves because they, too, behave improperly. It is not sufficient simply to recognize that this behaviour is wrong. Nor is it sufficient to count on God's kindness, simply because of knowing God.¹³⁷ God's kindness is intended to lead to repentance, to a turning back to God as Creator and Lord, which would result in changed behaviour. That Christians remain unrepentant, despite knowing what God requires, means that they will experience God's wrath at the final judgement¹³⁸, 'For he will render to every man according to his works' (2:6).

In view of what Paul is to say later about the impossibility of being justified by works, this verse presents difficulties. What the relationship between these two assertions is, will be clear only when we have discussed the latter. The present context, however, establishes that it is not the works themselves, but the Lordship they reflect, that is the concern of the judge. 'Those who seek for glory and honour and immortality' are those who seek their lost image of God: a right relationship with their Creator. 'Those who are factious and do not obey the

truth, but obey wickedness' are those who reject the Lordship of the Creator, as we saw in 1:18-32. The former do good, and latter evil. Those who seek to be conformed to their Creator will, at the final judgement, be so conformed. They will receive 'eternal life', 'glory and honour and peace'. Those who choose to go their own way will receive 'wrath and fury', 'tribulation and distress'.¹³⁹

If the gospel is the power of God for salvation for the Jew first and also the Greek, then whatever advantage or precedence for the Jew which might be implied has its reverse side too (2:9f). The Jew will be the first to be called to account. His privilege will work against him if he has not taken hold of it and accepted its accompanying responsibility. Then Paul re-emphasizes his point from 2:4 and sums it up in 2:11.

2:12-16

Perhaps in anticipation of questions or objections from his hearers, Paul spells out his meaning of this in 2:12-16. Here for the first time he specifies that the advantage the Jews claim is possession of the law. But possession or direct knowledge of the law is not to be the criterion for the final judgement. Thus the division at judgement is not to be between the Jew and Gentile but between those who do and do not do what the law requires. The problem of how the Gentiles can know the law, and in what sense, is overcome if we read this in the light of what precedes. We have already seen that the criterion for judgement is whether or not a man has sought to acknowledge God's Lordship, and that God's right to this is displayed to every man in creation. Thus the gospel reveals that to do what the law requires is to seek to acknowledge that the Creator is Lord, and is to be honoured and served. For those who know the law, the law is the measure of whether they have done this. For those who do not know the law, the measure is what they know in their hearts, the claim of the Creator on them.

2:17-29

In 2:17-24 Paul attacks the Jews directly, and gives a concrete expansion of what he has said in 2:1-4, that it is not sufficient simply to know the law and count on God being kind to his chosen people. Then in 2:25-29 he restates his point from 2:12-16 in terms of circumcision, and takes it further in a way that must have been offensive to Jews and Jewish Christians alike. Circumcision for the Jew is the unique sign of membership of God's chosen people, the heirs to his covenant promise. According to current exegesis of Gen 17, circumcision itself does not guarantee salvation, but simply acts as a means of accepting and appropriating the promise, which is bestowed independently of man's behaviour, and the accompanying responsibility to live in the presence of God.¹⁴⁰ Paul argues in 2:25 that if a circumcised Jew kept the law¹⁴¹ this physical sign of appropriation was valid, but if he did not keep the law then he was not appropriating the promise and so the physical sign was a meaningless contradiction. This argument could reasonably be made within Judaism¹⁴². What the gospel reveals is that the converse is also true. If a person keeps the law then he appropriates the promise, and so at the eschatological judgement will be regarded as circumcised, even if physically he is not. Further, such a person will be the measure of judgement against those who claim the promise and had every opportunity to appropriate it, but failed to do so. Thus, Paul concludes, membership of God's chosen people is not something external that can be seen and judged and praised by men, but is something hidden, to become apparent only at God's final judgement of the secrets of men.¹⁴³

The obvious problem with Paul's argument from 2:7 on is that he speaks of people, Jews and Gentiles, who will be rewarded as if they had sought to acknowledge God as Creator, although the argument of 1:18ff indicates there are none such. The key to this lies in the declaration that the real Jew is one whose circumcision is 'of the heart, spiritual and not literal' (2:29). As yet we have had no indication from Paul of what this means. We must await the further unfolding of the gospel, by which it is revealed, before attempting to explain it.

Before proceeding to chap. 3 we need to see how chap. 2 fits the historical situation as we see it. We have here an attack on Judaism. It is not addressed to Jews,

however, since its arguments are meaningful only within a community which has received the revelation of the gospel. Rather, it would appear to be addressed to Jewish Christians.¹⁴⁴ It indicates to the Jewish Christians that there is no point in appealing to, or seeking security in, the fact that they are Jews. Judaism has failed to be what it was intended to be. Its moral failure is no less than that amongst the Gentiles. Possession of the knowledge and signs given to Judaism is not to be the criterion for final judgement. In that context Jews and Gentiles are on the same footing. The Jew had no advantage and no security by virtue of being a Jew. Thus any claim to superiority or any attempt to judge or judaize Gentile Christians is pointless. At the same time, the Gentile Christian hearers must learn from this that there is no need for them to become Jews, to be circumcised or to keep the law, and, above all, that such action would certainly not provide them with any security before the eschatological judgement of the Creator.¹⁴⁵

3:1-20

Having thus established that Judaism offers no advantage at the final judgement, Paul, in Rom 3, begins to answer the inevitable question, 'What advantage has the Jew?' He asserts that the advantage is very real, since 'the Jews are entrusted with the oracles of God'. They have been given a unique opportunity, as God's elect and with the knowledge of the law, to live as the Creator requires, under his Lordship. They know the promise that attaches to this election.¹⁴⁶ That they do not appropriate this by living out their side of the covenant does not nullify the covenant itself, but only their participation in it. The validity of the covenant and the law as such is not impaired by the Jews' failure to respond. God remains faithful to his side of the bargain. But this remaining faithful inevitably results in judgement. Wrath is the reverse side of the covenant promise in just the same way as it is the reverse side of the righteousness revealed in the gospel. Here, for the first time in the body of the letter, Paul speaks of the righteousness of God. A Jew's failure will serve to show the righteousness of God just as much as if he had acknowledged it in the first place.

The objection to this view is that, if this is the case, then the Jew should not be condemned. Or, further, he should continue in his wickedness in order all the

more to show the glory of God. This argument, of course, is absurd, since it is in the condemnation and not in the wickedness itself that this faithfulness or righteousness is revealed. But Paul rejects it on the grounds that if God does not condemn the failure of the Jews, he can no more condemn the failure of the world. Thus Paul points out that the Jews are not a special case distinct from humanity, but only within humanity. "The faithfulness of God to Israel is a special instance of his faithfulness to all creation".¹⁴⁷ The claim of the covenant God on Israel is not other than the claim of the Creator God on the world. The righteousness of God revealed in judgement of the Jews is his power and right as Creator.¹⁴⁸ Thus, once again Paul shows that Jew and Gentile are on the same footing in the context of judgement.

So the question of whether the Jews have any advantage comes again (3:9).¹⁴⁹ This time the answer is emphatically no.¹⁵⁰ The Jews have not appropriated what was entrusted to them. No man lives under the Lordship of the Creator, all are 'under the power of sin',¹⁵¹ their minds are darkened and their thinking futile (1:21). Paul backs his assertion with scriptural quotations (3:10-18) which once more confirm that sinfulness and unrighteousness are directly associated with refusing to acknowledge God. In case the Jews should somehow still imagine that they stand outside this condemnation, Paul forces them in 3:19 to agree with him that these OT passages apply to them, whose scriptures they are.¹⁵² By these OT passages all objections and protestations are silenced. The Jews, just as much as the Gentiles, are indefensibly accountable to God for their failure to acknowledge him: 'For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law'. This assertion contrasts with, and at the same time confirms, the declaration of 2:13b. Even the Jew who fulfils the specific instructions of the law is not a 'doer of the law' because he does not thereby seek to know and acknowledge God. Rather, he puts himself under the Lordship of the law and so, like all those who reject the Creator's Lordship in favour of another, comes under the power of sin.¹⁵³

With this devastating conclusion, Paul completes the opening section of his argument, the history of God's righteousness to his creation which the gospel reveals. In summary, he has reminded his hearers that the Creator claims the right of Lordship over his creation. Man, created as image of God, was intended to live in

relationship with his Creator, acknowledging his Lordship and sharing his divine power and glory. Instead man chose other Lords, so the Creator withdrew his power and left man to his own devices, to live under the powers he chose, and to discover that these were no other than the power of sin. The Creator did not, however, withdraw his claim. This he will exercise with power at the final judgement. Then man will once more see the power and right which he should have acknowledged and shared but which he will then be forced to acknowledge to his cost. Within this history the Jews were a special case in that the Creator chose to reveal his claim and power to them in terms of the covenant, and in association with it, the law. Within this context his power and claim were described as righteousness. By this means the Jews could have been saved, and through them the Gentiles as well.¹⁵⁴ But the Jews, too, chose to ignore the claim and so for them too the power was withdrawn, to be revealed again at the final judgement, but then against them. Thus the whole world, Jews and Gentiles alike, are shown to be in a hopeless situation.¹⁵⁵

3:21-26

But now, Paul goes on (3:21), the Creator, the righteous God of Israel, has chosen to try once again to establish his claim in the present and so save men from the nasty eschatological surprise that otherwise awaits them. This time, however, his action is directly with the whole world, and not dependent upon Israel. For now the righteousness of God, which was spoken of in the Old Testament, 'has been manifested apart from the law'. The power and claim of the Creator and covenant God, which under the circumstances would not have been exercised until the final judgement, have been made accessible to mankind, which has lost its ability to comprehend them, and in a way that makes them available to all, not just to those who possess the law.

What is made available is 'the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe'. Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ will be able to break free from the distortion of his mind, the power of sin, and apprehend God's claim, and share in his power. This is for all, not just the Gentiles¹⁵⁶, 'since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'. With this sentence Paul sums

up the whole of 1:18-3:20: all men have sinned, no man has retained the divine glory of the image of God by remaining in right relationship to him. In so doing, Paul once more shows that God's righteousness is an expression of his creative power, and that his present action is specifically concerned with re-establishing his creation in accordance with his original intention.

That his action is to justify (3:24) indicates, however, that he does not seek to do this by undoing past history, but by bringing forward his eschatological judgement (2:13), by bringing the future into the present. The new age, or the new creation, of which the Apocryphal writers wrote, appears before its time, within history. Thus God does not abandon history as these writers expected, and so shows his faithfulness to the whole creation.

Not only is the eschatological judgement brought forward, but it is also entirely different from what it should be. No-one has acknowledged God. No-one has sought to acknowledge God. No-one is just. No-one is in a position to be justified. Nevertheless, God in his grace, in his desire to have his creation respond to his faithfulness, gives as a gift the status and accompanying privileges which man would have received if he had sought to acknowledge him (2:6ff). This gift is given 'through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus' to those who believe in him. Because of what God has done in Christ Jesus, believing in him is considered by God to be somehow equivalent to, or an adequate substitute for, acknowledging God.¹⁵⁷

Paul then goes on (3:25f) to describe what it is that God has done in Christ Jesus. It is beyond the scope of this work to try to deal with the difficulties of interpretation here. For our purposes it is sufficient to say that somehow in Christ's death, God, because of the faithfulness to his creation, found a way of dealing with the problem of man's failure to acknowledge him¹⁵⁸, so that his eschatological judgement, by which he was to reveal his righteousness, could be brought forward into the present, and reversed for all believers, in order to enable them to be as he intended men to be, to know and share his righteousness, his creative power, his divine glory.¹⁵⁹

3:27-31

Having made this relatively brief statement of the gospel's revelation of righteousness, Paul turns once again to the specific problem of Judaism, showing the Jewish Christians how this gospel they have received takes precedence over their Judaism, making exclusivist claims superfluous, without denying its significance. God's new expression of his faithfulness to the whole creation in no way invalidates his faithfulness to his covenant with Israel. Rather, it complements and encompasses it.

Paul tackles the problem from the point of view of boasting (3:27ff). In view of the context and our understanding of the situation in Rome, it would seem that the reference is to a claim of moral superiority, and therefore security before God, being made by Jewish Christians over Gentile Christians. Paul makes use of the word *νόμος* in such a way that he rhetorically uses the terminology of his hearers against them. Boasting, he declares, is excluded. The law that excludes it is not the law of works. A law of works would entitle one to boast of the works one had done. Rather it is excluded by the law of faith. When one's life is shaped by faith there is nothing to boast about, for the common affirmation of believers is that they are 'justified by faith apart from works of the law'.¹⁶⁰ Works of the law, while they may in themselves be commendable, have nothing to do with the positive status before God that believers receive.¹⁶¹

A claim that doing the particular things set down in the law is essential for right relationship with God implies, Paul goes on (3:29ff), that God is 'the God of Jews only'. But this is a denial of the fundamental monotheism of Judaism. The Jews' most basic affirmation is that their God is the one God, the Creator of all things. Thus he must also be God of the Gentiles, and must be free to relate to them directly as Gentiles, if he so chooses. To attempt to limit the Creator's activity to the confines of Judaism is a denial of that Judaism. In this new revelation of righteousness through the gospel, God has in fact chosen to deal directly with his whole creation, with the Jews as Jews and with the Gentiles as Gentiles. Both groups will be justified by their faith. This does not mean that the law is overthrown. We have seen already that God remains faithful to the Jews and will not abandon his covenant with them (3:3f). Further, we know that

the works of the Jew will be judged by the law (2:12). Above all, if having faith in Jesus Christ is now being accepted by God as equivalent to acknowledging him as God, then the purpose of the law is being fulfilled.

4:1-8

With an illustration from scripture, however, Paul takes the point even further. Starting again from the question of boasting, he spells out his argument from 3:27-31, defining his terms by means of the concrete example, and showing that the righteousness of faith not only now encompasses Judaism, but actually always formed its basis. Once again, he starts with common ground. highly prized by his hearers, then interprets it so radically that their assumptions are turned against them and the security is taken from under their feet.

The scene is set with the opening question (4:1). By going back to the beginning of Israel's history, to their founder, in human terms, all disputes about the place and purpose of Judaism ought to be settled once and for all. Abraham was considered, especially by the Rabbis, to be a righteous man, who had 'performed the whole law before it was given.'¹⁶² he, above all, must surely have been in a position to boasts about his works. 'But not before God', says Paul, 'For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."' It was not because of any claim he could make before God that Abraham was 'reckoned righteous' but simply because he believed God.¹⁶³ In a somewhat telescoped argument in 4:4f, Paul draws out the logic of the quotation from Gen 15:6. If one works, one has the right to claim appropriate payment. If one does not work one can make no such claim. Whatever is received is entirely unearned and must therefore be a gift. Since there is no mention of Abraham's righteous works at this point, they obviously play no part in his being reckoned righteous. Rather this comes as a totally unearned gift.

In making this argument, Paul makes certain assumptions about the nature of faith, without which his argument does not make sense. As it stands the argument seems to depend on his hearers already accepting the very point that he is trying to make, namely that being a Jew is not what entitles a man to justification. His

point would not have been immediately clear to his Jewish hearers since Jewish tradition had come to consider faith as a work, albeit the most basic of all works, of the law. It is only from the elaboration of the meaning of faith in 4:7bff that this section can be understood. However, Paul does offer an alternative expression for 'Abraham believed God' which captures the essence of what he means by faith, and at the same time sharply and radically sums up all that he has said so far: it is the one 'who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly' that is reckoned righteous.

'Work' for Paul clearly refers to keeping the law. This could be understood in two ways. It could mean keeping the law in the sense of fulfilling its purpose, which, as we have seen, would mean acknowledging God as God, recognizing and placing oneself under the Lordship of the Creator. But if a person did this he would be righteous, would share the Creator's power and glory as his image, and so would not need to be justified. Since no-one does this, no-one could be said to work, or to be in a position to boast of his works, though it is only in the light of the gospel that this fact can be recognized.

This understanding of 'work' is certainly consistent with Paul's gospel. In this context, however, it would seem that Paul is speaking of the performance of the actions set down in the law. He takes it that his hearers have not really grasped or accepted the gospel revelations and so argues against their point of view in their own terms, rather than in terms of what the gospel has shown about the wrath of God. His argument could therefore be paraphrased as follows: let us say that those who keep the precepts of the law are better Christians than those who do not, that the Jewish Christians can guarantee their ultimate salvation by keeping the law, and that Gentile Christians must also become Jews and keep the law if they really want to escape condemnation at the final judgement. In other words, let us assume for a moment that only God's chosen people, the godly keepers of the law, can be saved. Then this has two logical consequences. Firstly, it implies that we have something to offer God. It says that our justification is the due reward for our keeping the law, the wages of the worker. If that is so, then we have no need for faith, and thus no need for the gospel of righteousness by faith. Secondly, it excludes Abraham, for he did not work. Obviously this is absurd, so it must be possible to maintain that keeping the law is not a prerequisite for

salvation, without dishonouring the law.

But Paul's concern goes much further than this., The first consequence is to be taken very seriously, as is indicated by his stark declaration that Abraham's faith was in 'him who justifies the ungodly'. This is not a description of what God does, but a definition of who he is. Paul does not simply say that God justifies those outside Judaism as well as those inside. Nor is it just that faith and works are mutually exclusive alternative routes to justification. Those who put their trust in a god who justifies the godly are in fact trusting some god other than Abraham's God, and therefore some other than the only true God, the Creator. The implication of this is that their godliness is in fact defined by their conformity to a lesser god,¹⁶⁴ of their own making, which, as such, is none other than the power of sin. Thus, by arguing with them in their own terms, Paul shows the Jewish Christians what they could already have known from the gospel, if they had heard it aright. All men are guilty of giving their allegiance to a Lord of their own choosing; no man has acknowledged the Lordship of the Creator; all have lost the image of God, which is the only true godliness. In effect, God has no choice but to be a God who justifies the ungodly, if he is going to justify anyone at all.

That Abraham's faith is 'reckoned as righteousness' needs some clarification. This we can attempt from our knowledge of the reverse side of righteousness, namely wrath. As we have already observed, the elaboration of the nature of faith is yet to come. So far we know only that Abraham 'believed God' and is one 'who trusts him who justifies the ungodly'. We know that Abraham, like all men, did not acknowledge the Lordship of the Creator through recognizing his power as evidenced by the creation. But when, despite this, because of his faithfulness to his creation, the Creator addressed Abraham, as is related in Genesis, Abraham believed God would do what he said, and gave up the security of his home and homeland, putting his trust entirely in God. Thus, in a very limited sense, he acknowledged God's power, and God graciously accepted this faith as if it were a full acknowledgement of him as Creator, and justified Abraham. From this we see that faith as such is not righteousness—certainly not a righteous act in the legal sense—but the sort of openness to God, albeit limited and made possible only by God's address, which God intended man, as his image, to have. The

justification then, is a judgement that Abraham is as he should be, although he is not. Since, as indicated in 2:6ff, God renders to man in accordance with his judgement, this judging that Abraham is as he should be is accompanied by the gift which makes him so. His lost image is restored and he is able both to recognize and share the power and glory of his Creator.

Probably in accordance with rabbinic practice, perhaps because his interpretation of Genesis 15:6 is so radically different from customary exposition, Paul in 4:6-8 quotes again from scripture, this time calling on the support of another recognized authority, David. This quotation is not so clearly suited to Paul's purpose in that it speaks of forgiveness of sins, rather than the more typically Pauline overcoming of the power of sin, and does not mention righteousness. He gets around the problem, however, by giving his interpretation first, effectively putting his own words into David's mouth. Seen in this light, the blessing is the gift which accompanies judgement which is contrary to the real situation, the forgiveness or reckoning righteous of those who sin, the ungodly who do not perform the works of the law.¹⁶⁵ With this, Paul completes the elaboration of the point made in 3:27f, that boasting of works is excluded because justification is by faith.

4:9-12

In 4:9-12 the argument that righteousness by faith is for Gentiles as well as Jews is repeated by use of the Abraham illustration. This follows the direction of the argument in 3:29f and also answers the obvious objection that David would have been speaking specifically of Jews in the psalm quoted. Abraham's justification by faith was chronologically prior to his being specifically marked out as a Jew so is clearly independent of this designation. As a member of humanity not yet divided into Jews and Gentiles, he is justified by the Creator God. Circumcision, or the law, is then subservient to justification by faith. Paul's exact interpretation of the role of circumcision is debated, but there can be little doubt that his intention is to indicate that the purpose of Abraham's circumcision was to confirm publicly that this is the way God acted towards him. Thus if Abraham is patriarch, it is as patriarch to those towards whom God acts in the same way, rather than of those who simply bear the same external witness to that way of

acting. Hence the assertion of 3:30 is shown to be fundamentally consistent with Judaism, and the law is shown to be upheld because the preaching of justification by faith points the hearers in the direction that circumcision and the law were intended to point them.

4:13-17

Showing that justification is by faith rather than by works of the law, that it is equally available to Jew and Gentile, and that both these facts are consistent with what the law says, does not fully deal with the question of the perceived role of the law and the advantage of possessing it. A Jew who conceded these points might still maintain that, while all may by this means be spared destruction, the distinction between Jew and Gentile would continue in that only those who possessed the law would be heirs to the promise made to Abraham. This appears to be the issue with which Paul deals in 4:13-25.

Paul says that the promise is 'to Abraham and his descendants, that they should inherit the world' (4:13). There are two interrelated aspects to the promise: what is to be received and who is to receive it. The latter appears to have been of greater concern both to Abraham and Paul, but the former is not insignificant for our understanding of Paul. In most of the Genesis accounts of the promise to Abraham, it is a specific piece of land that he is to possess.¹⁶⁶ In Gen 22:17 he is told his descendants 'shall possess the gate of their enemies'. In his commentary, von Rad described this as almost excessive development, "foreign to the basis of the promises".¹⁶⁷

In the light of this, Paul's claim that Abraham and his descendants are to 'inherit the world' appears to be even more excessive. There is, however, a world dimension to the promise in Gen 12:3, 'by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves', which is repeated in Gen 22:18 and to Isaac in Gen 26:4. More importantly, and probably more specifically in Paul's mind, the promise in Gen 17:5f is that Abraham is to be 'the father of a multitude of nations' from whom 'kings shall come forth'. As von Rad points out, this involvement of all peoples of the world in the promise is one which sees these peoples as coming into the

same relationship to God as the one in which Abraham stands. Commenting on Gen 17:5f, von Rad says

One does not grasp the meaning of this promise if one thinks primarily of the Israelites, Edomites, and sons of Keturah (Gen 25:1ff); for the descendants about whom these words speak are not to be sought among those who are outside God's covenant, even less since later the same promise is made to Sarah (Gen 17:16). . . . As the Yahwist shows, Abraham's call was connected with the hope of a universal extension of God's salvation beyond the limits of Israel (Gen 12:3).¹⁶⁸

If this idea is put together with the promise of possession of land occupied, it can be argued that this promise is in effect a promise that Abraham's descendants will in fact inherit the world.

This idea, then, is the extreme extension of the promise of land. What for Abraham and his immediate family was a very specific and concrete gift is temporally and spatially expanded. The land is promised to him and to his descendants forever (Gen 13:15), the covenant is an everlasting covenant (Gen 17:7), and, as we have seen, all nations are ultimately to be seen as Abraham's descendants. As such, the promise is eschatological in nature. Understood in this way, the call and promise to Abraham can be regarded as the first step towards God's purpose of bringing the whole world, man and land, into relationship with him. He will be God to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 17:7). When this happens, the world, presumably, will be as it was intended to be, the whole created order under and acknowledging its Creator. Thus the covenant with Abraham may be regarded ultimately as a covenant of the Creator with his whole creation.

Beyond Genesis, the promise of land remains an important Old Testament theme, though its particular emphasis varies. The universal aspect disappears. Being the people of God comes to be seen more and more as part and parcel of being entitled to possess the land. This leads to cultic acts associated with the land, its sharing amongst the people of Israel and the offering of its produce,¹⁶⁹ and in particular to an understanding that the promise of possession of the land is conditional on doing as God requires, as set down by the law.¹⁷⁰ In this context, entry into the land is seen to carry with it a promise of peace. These concepts

are developed in Deuteronomy which, as von Rad notes, speaks of conditions for entering the promised land, although it was written after Israel had already entered it, thus bringing out the eschatological understanding in a new way. In von Rad's words,

Israel has in fact long been dwelling in the promised land, and we must therefore see a clear eschatological thread running through the whole work. All the benefits of which it speaks, and in particular the state of 'rest' which is the sum of them all, are set before the assembly once again as a promise made to those who decide for Yahweh.

Here we come face to face with one of the most interesting problems of Old Testament theology: promises which have been fulfilled in history are not thereby exhausted of their content but remain as promises on a different level, although they are to some extent metamorphosed in the process. The promise of land itself was proclaimed ever anew, even after its fulfilment, as a future benefit of God's redemptive activity.¹⁷¹

In view of this, it is not surprising that writers in later judgement related their expectation of a new creation of the world to the promise to Abraham.¹⁷² As we have seen, the Apocryphal writers saw no hope of the promise being fulfilled within history, but looked forward to the time when the present world would be brought to an end, the ungodly destroyed, and the righteous, who had remained faithful and kept the law, established as a holy nation, inheritors of the new world. A similar view was held amongst the rabbis.

It is reasonable, then, to conclude that Paul's statement of the promise as the inheritance of the world is to be understood eschatologically. The promise will be fulfilled when the whole world is brought into relationship with its Creator and the process begun with Abraham thus brought to completion. Like the Apocrypha writers, Paul sees the climax of this process as a final judgement and creation of a new world to be inherited by those judged to be righteous. Paul has already argued that Abraham was reckoned righteous because of his faith, and that it is those who follow his example of faith who are to be called righteous (4:1-12). He now points out (4:13ff) that the promise of inheritance is directly related to *this* righteousness. If it was directly related to the possession and keeping of the law, as Deuteronomy and subsequent writings suggest, then

faith and promise would be completely undermined. Firstly, the promise could not be fulfilled for the adherents of the law because, as we saw in chap. 3, no one achieves righteousness through the law. Secondly, the promise could not be fulfilled universally because it would be limited to just one nation. If the promise is to have any hope of being fulfilled it must by its very nature be independent of these limitations. If faith is to have any meaning it must be faith in a fulfillable promise.

There are no such problems when all that is required is faith because then the fulfilment of the promise is an act of grace (4:16). In the Old Testament the verb חָנַן is the word used to describe the action of one who freely turns in kindness to another. It is the

process whereby one who has something turns in grace to another who has nothing, nor is this just an impersonal transfer of things, but a heart-felt movement of the one who acts to the one acted upon.¹⁷³

The noun חֲסֶד speaks of this turning particularly within the context of a given relationship.¹⁷⁴ Israel in its need could call on the grace of God on the strength of the covenant relationship. As such, God's grace could be paralleled with his salvation, mercy, righteousness or faithfulness.¹⁷⁵ The promise of God's assurance, through Abraham to all men, is that he is kindly disposed towards them, that he has freely chosen to give them what they do not and cannot by their own efforts have. Those who believe this promise know that they can take hold of what is offered. Thus it is not exclusively available to those who, knowing of this promise, express their knowledge and confidence by keeping the law. It is a promise to all Abraham's descendants which, as Paul has argued, means all men, so it will be fulfilled for all who believe as Abraham did.

That Abraham is 'father of us all' is in itself an expression of the act of grace. Abraham is not father of us all as a result of his own doing. Rather, God tells him, 'I have made you the father of many nations' (4:17).¹⁷⁶ I have made you describes an act of creation. Like possession of the land, it has two aspects, present and eschatological. Firstly, the childless old man is given a son. He is given a descendant that he can see, a physically discernible gift which might be

regarded as a foretaste of what is to come. Secondly, Abraham is made father of all who have faith. In Abraham, the Creator takes the first step towards reversing the situation in which the whole creation refuses to acknowledge him. He creates the possibility of mankind to trust him and so escape ultimate condemnation and death.

Paul has now shown that not only righteousness, but also inheritance of the promise is dependent exclusively on faith and so universally available. He thus finally eradicates the basis for any Jewish-Christian claim to advantage or superiority, or for any pressure or temptation for Gentile-Christians to become Jews and place themselves under the law. He goes on to ward off any further misunderstanding of what God requires by showing from the example of Abraham the radical nature of grace and the sort of attitude that is faith.

4:17b

The God in whom Abraham believed is the God 'who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist' (4:17b). This is the God who earlier (4:5) was described as 'him who justifies the ungodly'. When the gracious God turns in kindness to man, the gift he gives is in fact the reverse of what man has or is. The situation he addresses with his grace is not so much some sort of neutral having nothing, as a negative having less than nothing. What he offers is not simply assistance in dealing with a problem or partial improvement of man's plight, but total transformation, possible only through the exercising of inconceivable power.

The idea that God 'calls into existence the things that do not exist' is familiar to us as a designation of God as Creator. Translations which render ὡς 'as if' are to be resisted. Although to our minds the calling of something presupposes its existence, the idea that God's calling of the nonexistent amounts to behaving as if the nonexistent were something does not do justice to the phrase in its original usage and even less to Paul's usage. The context, and the parallelism with the other designations of God here, make it clear that Paul's intention is to convey the full dynamic and logical absurdity of what the Creator does. He does not simply

call and then wait for something to appear. His call brings things into existence. Although the expression is not original to Paul, and may have been liturgical, the reference here is quite specific. If it were a general acknowledgement of God as Creator of all things, the implication would be that Abraham had recognized the Creator of his own accord, which, as we know from chap. 1, no-one is in a position to do. It is in promising the childless old man numerous descendants, fatherhood of many nations, that God reveals his creative power to Abraham. Only when he finds himself in the presence of this God does Abraham come to faith. It is through his belief in God's claim that he fathers a son, and becomes the first, and so the father, of all who believe this God, who thus effects what he promises and shows himself to be who he claims to be.

That God 'gives life to the dead' does not obviously fit the immediate context. This expression, too, is not original to Paul and quite probably liturgical, but certainly relevant for Paul's proclamation of the Christian gospel. As far as the Abraham story is concerned, the giving of life to the dead seems in the first instance to refer to the birth of a child to parents past the reproductive age. One could say that dead, or as good as dead, reproductive organs were made alive, or that a living child was given to a dead womb. The former most nearly parallels the idea of life being given to the dead insofar as it is what was dead that is made alive. It is more likely, however, that Paul's interest was in the actual product of the living child, so at this level the expression is rather forced on the illustration. At the same time, this understanding does suggest that creation out of nothing and giving life to the dead are one and the same thing.

On what we have called the eschatological level of the promise, the formula 'who gives life to the dead' can be understood only if we apply conclusions drawn from Paul's opening argument. No man acknowledges the Creator. All have fallen short of his glory and are less than men. They serve sin rather than God and deserve to die. They have no possibility of pulling themselves out of this situation and so are as good as dead already. Then God addresses Abraham, promising him that he will be father of many nations. Abraham believes God and this is reckoned to him as righteousness. As we have argued, this means, at least from the perspective of creation, that Abraham's acknowledgement of God with respect to the limited view of him that is revealed in the promise, is reckoned

in God's judgement to be as good as acknowledgement of him as Creator of all things. Since God gives to man in accordance with his judgement, Abraham is assured of being restored to full manhood, sharing the glory of God and having the ability to recognize his Creator, thus being rescued from certain death and given life. All those who follow Abraham's example of faith receive the same treatment: though dead, they will be given life. Thus again we can say that, through Abraham's faith, God effects what he promises and shows himself to be the God who gives life to the dead.

Paul has already shown that this process of reckoning a man to be righteous because of his faith amounts to justification of the ungodly. Thus we see that justification of the ungodly is no less than giving life to the dead. There is no real distinction between these two descriptions of God's activity. At the same time we have argued that the calling into existence of what does not exist refers to God's creation of people with faith. Since those who have faith are justified, or given life, it follows that this activity cannot be distinguished from the other two descriptions of what God does. We conclude, therefore, that in designating God variously as him who 'calls into existence the things that do not exist', 'justifies the ungodly' and 'gives life to the dead', Paul is simply using different words, or images, to say the same thing.

It is perhaps tempting at this point to regard Paul's argument as being somewhat contrived. We therefore digress for a moment from our exposition of Romans, in order to point out from our study of creation in the Old Testament, that Paul's picture of God as Creator is consistent with the picture painted there, and not necessarily dependent on his interpretation of the Abraham story. Throughout the literature studied, it is asserted that as Creator God has the right to Lordship over his creation. It is recognized that the reverse side of the power to create is the power to destroy. The possibility of being loyal or disloyal to the Lord is fundamental to the creation story as it is told in Genesis. Disloyalty is seen as man's attempt of his own accord to be like God. God tells man that the consequence of disloyalty, or disobedience, is death. In fact the story tells us that the punishment inflicted is alienation from God. We may perhaps infer from this that man alienated from God is dead, or at least as good as dead. This description of the human situation closely parallels Paul's description in 1:18ff.

Despite all this, there is a conviction in the Old Testament that the Creator will preserve his creation. Logically this is possible only if God acts decisively to reverse man's situation. Paul echoes this view when he argues that God's saving activity is out of faithfulness to the whole creation. It is in this context that he introduces the example of Abraham. His interpretation of God's activity in addressing Abraham as he did is not unlike Deutero-Isaiah's message. The main emphasis in Deutero-Isaiah is actually the rescue of exiled Israel, but it is pointed out that the purpose of this is to bring all nations to recognize God. The prophet sees the calling of the people of Israel as a creation out of nothing, though he refers mainly to the exodus, rather than Abraham, as starting point. The hoped for release from captivity will likewise be a creation out of nothing, the calling of a nation which to all intents and purposes had ceased to exist. The promised rescue was to be accompanied by, or likened to, flowering of the wilderness and bringing forth of offspring from barren wombs—creative activity which could well be described as the giving of life to the dead. Central to the message is a call to the people of Israel to trust God, to believe in his ability as Creator to bring about incredible reversals in the normal course of events, and above all to believe that God had forgiven them their sins, not because of their deserving, but because of his care for them. Thus, although this message is addressed primarily to a concrete historical situation, with very little of an eschatological dimension, it contains, to a greater or lesser extent, all the elements which Paul highlights from the Abraham story: out of faithfulness to his creation, the creating, life-giving, justifying God, through his prophet, calls on his people to have faith in him, in order that he may fulfil his promises to them.

4:18-25

The sort of faith that Deutero-Isaiah seeks to generate amongst his people is the sort of faith that Abraham exemplifies. Paul elaborates in 4:18-22. It is faith that hopes when, on the basis of all human experience or expectation, there is no ground for hope. This is not, however, an arbitrary hoping for the impossible, as Käsemann and Cranfield rightly point out¹⁷⁷, but a hoping for an impossibility defined by God's promise, an impossibility which may be described in the terms in which God reveals himself, as designated in 4:5,17. It is for this reason that Paul

repeats the content of Abraham's hope in 4:18. In 4:19 we learn that Abraham's faith is a faith that continues undaunted, even when human reasoning reflects on the unexpected promise and finds it absurd. Rather than concentrating on the content of the promise, Abraham focuses on its giver. 'No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God' (4:20). This behaviour is, at least in a limited sense, the reverse of the sort of behaviour that incurs the wrath of God. In trusting God concerning the promise, Abraham is giving glory to God, acknowledging his Creator within the context of his particular experience. As a result, presumably, his darkened mind (1:21) is to that extent enlightened so that he is better able to know God and therefore to strengthen his faith. Since the reverse side of wrath is righteousness, this attitude of Abraham's is, within the confines of the promise, an attitude of righteousness which God in his graciousness accepts as sufficient to reverse his condemnation. In this sense, then, Abraham's faith is 'reckoned to him as righteousness' (4:22).

With this repetition of his original point, Paul concludes his account of the Abraham story. Having begun by using it to illustrate and enforce his argument against misunderstanding, he now concludes by showing the relevance of the story for a positive statement of the gospel (4:23-25). As he has already asserted Paul is convinced that God's response to Abraham's faith is not exceptional, but simply the first instance of what was to be his attitude thereafter. So Paul now tells his readers that the story was recorded for the sake of subsequent generations, in particular the present generations. Righteousness will likewise be reckoned to those who now have faith in God as Abraham did. Now, however, the God in whom Abraham believed has revealed his creative, life-giving power in a new way. Unlike Abraham, who had no basis for trusting God to fulfil his promise, the present generation know of a specific demonstration of the Creator's power on which to base their hope. In order even yet to have his way with his creation, God has taken the further step of having Jesus die and raising him from the dead¹⁷⁸, so that those who had failed to apprehend his purpose might again be given the opportunity of trusting him¹⁷⁹. Those who believe he has done this will, like Abraham, be reckoned to have acknowledged him as God and so be spared final condemnation, despite their present failure and inability to know and acknowledge him fully.

The discussion of Abraham's faith may be seen to throw further light on the historical situation to which Paul is writing, or at least to his interpretation of it. So far we have suggested that Paul is writing to a community consisting of Jewish and Gentile Christians apparently in conflict over questions of faith and obedience, and the relative validity and significance of Christianity and Judaism. It appears that each group, feeling secure in its own salvation, was making judgements on the other. We postulate that the Jewish Christians, critical of the behaviour of Gentile Christians, were claiming superiority or advantage, and arguing that the Gentiles ought to express their faith in the same way as the Jewish Christians, by keeping the law, if they really wanted to be sure of their salvation. The implication is that Judaism is an essential part of Christianity, Gentile Christianity being valid only insofar as it placed itself under the Jewish umbrella. Paul argues that this position is unacceptable both from the point of view of the gospel and from that of Judaism. The gospel shows that even those who possess the law have failed to attain its true objective. Judaism shows that such exclusivism contradicts the basic tenets of the Jewish faith in that it denies the uniqueness of God and amounts to a claim that justification is by works.

Paul's advice appears to be that rather than concentrating on the moral failure of the Gentiles and concluding that they cannot possibly be saved, the Jewish Christians should acknowledge that they, too, have failed. Possession of the law does not exclude them from judgement any more than the Gentiles. Instead of concerning themselves with what they can do, they should turn their attention to God and trust him to keep his promise, believing that he has the power to bring about changes beyond their imagining, such as he did in Jesus Christ. It could also be argued that Paul sees the Jews' own concern to keep the law as a weakening of faith. This should not necessarily be taken to mean that Paul is in opposition to Jewish practice, or accusing them of thinking their justifications is based on works rather than faith. If he is offering a corrective to them as far as their own faith is concerned, then it is to remind them that their faith is now based on God's action in Christ, and not simply on his actions in electing and preserving Israel.

The concept of God as Creator is basic to this argument. It shows what God requires, the nature of man's failure and the reason for his helplessness, the

purpose and power of justification, the true nature of the responsibility which accompanies this privilege, and the danger and misunderstanding which arise from exclusivist concentration on the privilege itself rather than on its source and purpose. Above all, it provides a key to understanding what the righteousness of God that is revealed in the gospel is. As such, it would appear at this stage to be central to Paul's whole theology, as well as to his interpretation of it for the Roman situation, unless his formulation of the gospel itself in 1:16f is already framed in terms specifically directed to the situation.

While much of our interpretation is in agreement with that of Käsemann, we consider that his perception of the historical situation colours his understanding in a way that fails to do full justice to Paul's argument, or indeed to his own insights. As we understand it, Käsemann sees the content of the epistle as being primarily, or even entirely, determined by the apostle's own situation and concerns, rather than those of the community in Rome. Thus Paul's earlier epistles become the norm for understanding the issues in Romans. Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian community, introducing himself and his gospel prior to his visit. His overriding concern is to defend his apostleship to the Gentiles and refute such misunderstandings of him as might currently be held in Rome. Thus his arguments are seen more as generalized assertions, than as an attempt to throw light on a specific situation.

In this context, Paul's gospel is interpreted as a gospel specifically for Gentiles. Even so, it is difficult to see why Käsemann considers the argument in 2:17-4:25 to be directed against Judaism as such. Having argued, rightly we believe, that the judgement referred to in 2:5-11 is to be exercised over Christians,¹⁸⁰ Käsemann fails to follow this through and recognize that Paul's subsequent argument is designed to show the Jewish Christians that their failure to keep the law makes them just as culpable as the Gentile Christian who do not have the law. The point is that the law gives no advantage, and not that it is necessarily to be discarded. In concluding that 'no human being will be justified in God's sight by works of the law, since through the law comes knowledge of sin' (3:20), Paul is not implying that the Jews thought that they were justified by works of the law rather than by faith, but that their failure in regard to the law shows up their lack of faith in the God who justifies, for, as Käsemann says, at the final judgement

faith and works coincide.¹⁸¹ Their mistake is that they see the possession of the law as proof of their justification and so give glory to the law rather than to God. It is only when, apparently ignoring the new and now directly universal revelation of God's righteousness, the Jewish Christians imagine that the law, which was given to the people of Israel to enable them to manifest their faith in God as he revealed himself to them, is still the only and necessary vehicle for living out one's justification by faith, that Paul argues that their attitude amounts to a belief in justification by works which is contrary to justification by faith.¹⁸²

Käsemann, on the other hand, assumes from the start that Paul's doctrine of justification by faith constitutes the centre of a gospel to the Gentiles which contradicts the fundamental presupposition of Judaism. Thus he attributes an attitude that justification is by works to Judaism itself. He characterizes the Jew as someone who assumes he wins God's favour by his own efforts, and generalizes this picture so that the Jew becomes for him the typical representative of religious humanity, boasting of its own achievements before God. In light of this, Paul's argument that no-one keeps the law is taken as a description of the futility and frustration of Judaism, and justification by faith as an entirely new revelation standing over against Judaism. As Käsemann puts it,

Faith and boasting are incompatible, for the believer no longer lives out of or for himself. The eschatological end of the world proclaims itself anthropologically as the end of one's own ways of salvation, whereas the law in fact throws a person back on himself and therefore into the existing world of anxiety about oneself, self-confidence, and unceasing self-assurance.¹⁸³

Thus we consider that Käsemann distorts Paul's argument by assuming that the Jews consciously held a view which Paul in fact introduces to illustrate to them what their exclusive attitude amounts to. Thus he bases his interpretation on an inaccurate caricature of the Jew and then reads in a resultant state of anxiety, strongly reminiscent of Luther's experience, for which there is no evidence in the text.

5:1-11

We continue now to work our way through Romans, again looking primarily for points where the concept of God as Creator plays a role, and for further clues to the historical situation.

Chap. 5 begins a new section in that in it Paul discusses some implications of the gospel for the life of the believer. At the same time it follows naturally from the conclusion of chap. 4 in which, having described the gospel and explained how it shows certain attitudes and assumptions to be misunderstandings, he begins to explain more fully what he believes the appropriate attitude to be. We assume that this section also takes its place within the total framework of Paul's attempt to address the situation in Rome. He has shown that reverting or converting to Judaism does not provide a solution, so presumably he is now suggesting an alternative and effective approach. If this is so, we can expect that the particular implications of the gospel which he highlights will give us further insight into the issues causing concern or conflict in Rome.

Paul opens with a confident statement which carries the Romans along with him, whether they like it or not, and indirectly silences any lingering doubts about the necessity for those justified by faith in Jesus to keep the law. We saw earlier that when the writer of Deuteronomy exhorted the Israelites to keep the law, so that they could enter the promised land, a particular benefit they could look forward to was peace. In contrast, Paul declares, 'since we are justified by faith, we have¹⁸⁴ peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' (5:1). If alienation from God is, as the gospel reveals, the punishment exercised on the unrighteous, it follows that the righteous are not alienated from him. Accordingly, those who are justified are in relation with God. Through their faith in Jesus the state of enmity with the Creator is ended. They now relate to God in accordance with his intention in creating them in his own image. Being justified and being at peace with God are one and the same thing.

This is the position which was made available to the believer through Christ, both in the sense that his death and resurrection made it possible and in the sense that it is faith in him that God accepts as sufficient acknowledgement of him as

Creator, where 'grace' here refers to the benefit to the recipient rather than to the act of kindness itself.¹⁸⁵ It is the first step towards the complete restoration of the image of God which gives man a share of the Creator's glory.¹⁸⁶ Thus the judgement brought forward into the present provides the basis for the believer's hope in its culmination at the final judgement, a hope which is a genuine cause for boasting (5:2). Further, the believer may boast of that which strengthens this hope, as does suffering, according to Paul (5:3f). The argument in these verses may be seen to parallel 4:18-20, where Abraham's unwavering hope in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles resulted in a strengthening of his faith, so that boasting is in what God can do, a giving of honour to God. Believers are not put to shame by their hoping. They are not shown up as people boasting in something that is not real and worthy only of ridicule, 'because God's love has been poured into their hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to them' (5:5). This is another expression of the re-establishment of relationship between man and God, the reversal of the darkening of 1:21. The expression 'love of God' is introduced here where the focus is on harmony between man and God. This is not emotion or sentimentality, but a further designation of the power of God, as Käsemann argues:

As in similar constructions with the genitive the reference is to the encompassing power of God, with a special orientation to being for us, as 8:31ff clearly indicates. As the apostle's anthropological terms characterize existence in its different relations, something of the same is true of these genitive constructions. They, too, speak of a relation of divine power, or, more accurately, of the powerful God, the relation being to the creature. In wrath this power reveals itself as destruction to rebels, in God's righteousness it creates salvation for rebels, in faithfulness it means that the Creator holds firmly to his will and work in salvation history. In love this power shows itself to be the solidarity which overcomes the opposition between Creator and creature, which upholds the miracle of the new existence, and which at the same time continually brings awareness of it.¹⁸⁷

Through the gift of the Holy Spirit a believer has a real knowledge of God and of his power and claim upon him which in turn is experienced as a sharing in that power.

This interpretation of 5:5 is confirmed in 5:6-8 where the process of justification

is described as God showing his love. While man was 'yet helpless', powerless, unable to recognize God either in creation or in the law, 'Christ dies for the ungodly', for those who had lost their image of God and were under the power of sin. 'One will hardly die for a righteous man' for such a man would know God already and there would be nothing gained. 'Perhaps for a good man' who seeks to obey God, or to know him, but is nevertheless under the power of sin, 'one will dare even to die' since he would surely deserve help in overcoming the power of sin. 'But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us'. The act which makes justification possible is totally undeserved and unconditional.

If God has gone to such lengths to justify those so distant from him, he is unlikely to throw away what has been won at such great cost (5:9). For this reason the believer can be confident of being spared at the final judgement. Whatever the continuing existence of sin may mean, it does not mean that God has failed. Put another way, namely in terms of peace rather than justification, if God paid such a price to reconcile his enemies, he is hardly likely to betray them at the last. The fact that Jesus Christ now lives is an assurance to the believer that he will not be put to death at the final judgement (5:10). So the believer has abundant reason to hope, even if from his point of view the obstacles seem overwhelming. What is more, he can boast about God by boasting about Jesus because of the reconciliation he already enjoys as a result of God's action in Jesus.

5:12-20

Having so far argued that imposition of the law is no answer to the problem of sin, and that the continuing presence of sin is no reason for abandoning hope of salvation, Paul in 5:12-20 attempts to explain how sin had been dealt with by God's action in Christ. He does this by drawing a series of rather confusing parallels between Adam and Christ. It is beyond the scope of our study to untangle his argument in detail. Our comments shall be restricted to an outline which concentrates on aspects of the argument which allude to the idea of God as Creator.

Clearly the story of Adam belongs to the story of creation. Adam, created in God's image, living in the garden in close relationship with God, questions God's right of Lordship over him and decides to disobey the command not to eat from the tree in the midst of the garden, the tree of life, of the knowledge of good and evil. As a result, he gains knowledge of good and evil. God's punishment was to make him subject to the evil he had discovered, or in other words, to put him under the Lordship of sin, and send him out of the garden, thus alienating him from his Creator. The promised punishment for this disobedience was death, so alienation from God and subjection to the power of sin can be understood as death, or at least as condemnation which would lead to death, so that the condemned was as good as dead. Because of this one act of disobedience, this one trespass, sin entered the world and established its power so that all men thereafter gave their allegiance to it. In so doing, they did not acknowledge their Creator as they should have, and this trespass on the part of all meant that all were subject to sin, alienated from God, condemned to death. When the law was given there was a new opportunity to acknowledge God, but in fact it served only to increase the trespass and sin gained even more ground. Thus, through Adam, a world order in which all men exist alienated from God, under the Lordship of sin, facing condemnation and death, was established.

Through Jesus Christ, however, a new world order has been established.¹⁸⁸ This is God's gracious gift to helpless mankind. Through the grace given to him, Jesus Christ acknowledged God's right over him to the point of allowing himself to be put to death in obedience to God's command. As acknowledgement of God, this was an act of righteousness which enables man to see the righteousness of God, previously hidden from him. Through Jesus Christ the Creator's power and claim on man becomes apparent. As we have seen, acknowledgement of God's righteousness as it is revealed in this specific event is reckoned as acknowledgement of him as Creator. All who believe in this are justified. So through the one man Jesus Christ, many who, by not acknowledging the Creator, were trespassers, are now made righteous. As this uniquely righteous man now lives, so those who through him are graciously given the gift of righteousness will, instead of being condemned to death at the final judgement, be acquitted and live. Thus through Jesus Christ, a new world in which men may exist in relation to their Creator, under his Lordship, looking forward to ultimate acquittal and life, was

established.

Clearly the greater the failure of men, the greater the grace to counteract it must be. This does not mean, however, that the recipients of grace continue to sin in order to increase the amount of grace they receive.¹⁸⁹ On the contrary, since, by grace, a new order has been established, the behaviour consistent with the old order ought to be abandoned (6:1f). With this assertion, Paul moves from the question of how sin has been defeated in broad terms to the way in which this general defeat works itself out in the life of the believer, explaining the principles on which the fight against it should be conducted and thus providing a suitable alternative to the enforcement of the law which some of the Roman community appear to have been advocating.

Paul's argument against continuing to sin is that the believer has 'died to sin'. This is a new concept in the letter, elaborated in the following verses (6:3-11). Since the whole explanation revolves around the ideas of death and resurrection, we shall leave discussion of this passage to the chapter dealing with these concepts. The essence of Paul's conclusion is that, because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the believer is freed from the power of sin which had formerly held him captive.

6:12-14 appears to be an argument against a misunderstanding of what he has said so far. These verses seem to answer a position which says that if a believer is no longer under the power of sin he can do what he likes without endangering his relationship with God and his accompanying assurance of acquittal because of his faith, and that, in fact, doing right, especially in terms of keeping the law, is a denial of this freedom because the law brings sin. Paul argues against this. Believers should not do wrong because in so doing their actions are serving sin. Rather, they should behave as if they had already been fully acquitted, letting their actions be directed by God so that they demonstrate his righteousness. There is no danger of this righteous behaviour holding them under the power of sin because it is determined not by the law, but by grace.

This situation is not to be regarded as a licence to sin (6:15-19). Not being bound to keep the law does not mean deliberately going against the behaviour required

by the law. One does what one does in service of one's Lord. If a person sins he is under the Lordship of sin and so will be condemned to death in the final judgement. If he obeys God he is under his Lordship and so will be acquitted and share God's righteousness. Believers are now in the latter position, set free from sin because of their faith, knowing God's love and righteousness in their hearts through the Holy Spirit given to them. So, just as, as servants of sin, they became more and more embroiled in sinful behaviour, now, as servants of God, they should submit themselves to his righteousness and so become more and more conformed to it in their behaviour.¹⁹⁰ The concept of God as Creator occurs here indirectly. It is as Creator that he claims the right to Lordship. His righteousness is his creative power and claim, his glory which demands acknowledgement. Thus, those who submit themselves to his power and claim receive this power and are enabled to live more in harmony with him and with other human beings, thereby giving glory to their Creator. As they experience this, they are better able to acknowledge their Lord and so become more receptive to his power.¹⁹¹ Ultimately they will be made completely open to God, in full righteousness with him, and thus fully restored to his image, acknowledging and sharing his glory.¹⁹²

In 6:20-23 Paul more or less repeats his argument, beginning with the idea of being free from a power, presumably to answer in the same terms the idea that being freed from sin means that sin can no longer harm the person so freed, so that there is no necessity to avoid sinning. Paul appeals to the believers' former situation. 'When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness' (6:20). This meant that they could sin as much as they liked, disregarding righteousness, but it did them no good, for their obedience to sin was shameful in God's sight and would have culminated in death. The new position could be stated in parallel: Now you are slaves of God, you are free in regard to sin. Therefore you are able to be righteous and disregard sin. In fact, Paul reverses the order, since it is only in being set free from sin that they are able to become 'slaves of God' (6:22), and because the ability to be righteous is given to them rather than being the automatic consequence of their being set free. Thus the two situations are not completely parallel, as is clear from the contrast between wages and free gift in the concluding statement, 'For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord' (6:23).

With this affirmation Paul completes his explanation of why Gentile Christians should resist sinful behaviour, and turns his attention to the Jews (7:1). This chapter is notoriously difficult, but a detailed analysis of the issues raised is beyond the scope of this work. We shall therefore limit ourselves to an outline of what seems, in the light of our study so far, to be its main thrust. Just as in chap. 6 Paul argues that Gentile believers have 'died to sin', he here points out to the Jewish believers¹⁹³ that they have 'died to the law' so that it is no longer binding on them (7:1-6). This is not to say that 'the law is sin'. Rather it reveals sin. Before the law was given, man could not regard himself as sinful because he knew nothing else (1:21). The law provided a means of recognizing sin in that it spelled out a contrasting way of life such as would be lived by a righteous man. In performing this function of showing up sin, the law is 'holy and just and good'. Knowledge of sin, however, was not enough to counter its power. Instead the law provided a focus and specific content for the sinful behaviour of unrighteous man under the power of sin, so that he became even more sinful. In spite of this, the law itself remains good in that it then shows up sin even more.

When a man is justified he is free from sin, as Paul knows from his own experience. But when he then continues to try to keep the law, sin, which had lost its power, grasps it again by means of the commandment because, according to our understanding, in so doing he seeks to become righteous in his behaviour by keeping the law, instead of looking to God to give him the power to become so. Thus when knowing that the law is good, he strives to do what it demands, he finds that he cannot, because sin maintains its power over his behaviour. Being justified by faith, he knows righteousness in his heart, and delights in it, but not being fully conformed to the image of God, he does not have the power to banish the sin which determines his behaviour. Because he therefore does not give glory to God with his body, he deserves to die. He himself is powerless to change this. Fortunately, however, through Jesus Christ, God can and will deliver him, ultimately granting him eternal life.

In this chapter, then, Paul once more appeals to the idea of Lordship to explain the Jewish Christian position with regard to sin. He points out that Jewish

believers are no longer bound to give their allegiance to the law. He acknowledges, however, that they do still try to obey its commandments. So he reminds them that, by so doing, they are not avoiding sinning any more than the Gentile Christians, as they perhaps were claiming. He does not call on them to give up this attempt, but rather identifies with them in their struggle to maintain their traditions without abandoning their justification by faith and that the latter will, in the end, triumph despite the contradiction and conflict of their present existence.

8:1-11

On the basis of his confidence in ultimate deliverance, in chap. 8 Paul calls on believers to stop concentrating on contradictory earthly realities and to focus instead on the hope which they have through Jesus Christ. In view of the way this follows on from chap. 7, and the impression we have that the Gentile Christians were, if anything, not concerned enough about these things, we take it that this chapter, too, is directed primarily to Jewish Christians.

The first part of the chapter (8:1-11) explains why, although believers continue to serve sin in their behaviour, they can be confident that they will not be condemned at the final judgement because they serve God in their minds. The giving of the Spirit, which constitutes their justification by faith and determines their attitude to God, overrules the power of sin which continues to determine their overt behaviour through the law. The Jews, likewise justified by faith, were given the law as a means of expressing in their behaviour the righteousness they had from God. Instead, it provided an opportunity for sin to take an even stronger hold and their attention focussed on striving to keep the law to please God rather than to honour him, to manifest their chosenness rather than to demonstrate God's righteousness. They thus gave their allegiance to the law and so, since this was other than God, in reality to sin. But now (8:3) God has found a way through sending Jesus as a human vulnerable to sin, of overcoming the problem of man being condemned because of his sinful behaviour, and freeing him to acknowledge God's righteousness in accordance with the intention of the law. Thus the law is fulfilled (8:4) by those whose life is determined not by concern

with behaviour, but by the Spirit which imparts God's righteousness to them and enables them to give glory to him as is his due as Creator. This is the only course which leads to ultimate acquittal and life in peaceful relationship with God. The alternative course does not and cannot please God, and those who follow it exist in a state of hostility to God which leads ultimately to condemnation and death.

But (8:9) the Roman Christians are not in this latter category. They are in the Spirit, their life is determined by it, they belong to the new world order established by Jesus Christ, provided, of course, that the Spirit of God really is in them. 'Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him'. Spirit of God and Spirit of Christ are one and the same thing. The resurrected Christ shares the glory, the righteousness, the power of God. It is acknowledgement of his Lordship that is reckoned as acknowledgement of the Creator's Lordship. When Christ, by means of the Spirit, is in a man, that man's fundamental allegiance is indisputable. Then, although sin may determine his behaviour in such a way as to set his body on the road to condemnation, so that it is regarded as being as good as dead, his spirit, his inner self, is 'alive because of righteousness' (8:10). The Spirit in him is a share in the power of God which is his gift to those who acknowledge him, the inner experience of what it means to be the image of the Creator. This power is the power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead, the creative power of God. Those who have this power in them, the justified, can be confident that God will likewise exercise his creative power on their bodies which, being under the power of sin, would otherwise be condemned to death.

8:12-17

This means that believers are not indebted to their bodies, to the flesh. It has no claim on them or right to demand certain behaviour from them, since the sort of behaviour it demands leads to death. Rather, they should respond to the rightful claim of the Creator. Paul says, 'if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live' (8:13). This idea will be discussed further in our chapter on death and resurrection. For the moment we can note that it seems to parallel 6:1-11 and probably 8:3. Since the sin that rules their behaviour is

condemned, by allowing the Spirit to rule, they ought to let this condemnation come into effect in the present, rendering their desires powerless by refusing to respond to them.

The possibility and responsibility to do this comes with the recognition of what it means to be believers. The receiving of the Spirit is not to be regarded lightly. 'For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God' (8:14). The extraordinary claim, made for Jesus Christ in 1:4 is here quite specifically made for all believers. Through the Spirit they are granted the highest status imaginable, and not merely an empty status, but a real change of nature and being, brought about by the Creator's power working in them and imparted to them. They are not held in submission by a master to be feared, but are co-workers of God, sharing his resources for creative living and acting. Their very experience of finding themselves calling on God as father is evidence that this relationship really exists, and therefore that their future will be determined accordingly, as Christ's was and is.

In 8:17, somewhat surprisingly after the long discussion about sin, Paul reintroduces the idea of suffering, first raised in 5:3. This may reflect the close and often causal connection in people's minds between sin and suffering. Alternatively, it may be that it was the continuing presence of these two things in the lives of the believers that was leading to uncertainty about the reality or effectiveness of the faith, so that Paul's argument regarding the ultimate demise of sin is equally applicable to suffering. In the more immediate context, the call not to allow life to be determined by the desires of the body can apply both to the desire to sin and the desire to avoid suffering. Just as Christ, through his suffering, condemned sin in the flesh (8:3), so the believer, by not allowing fear of suffering to lead him to flinch from following the leading of the Spirit, can 'put to death the deeds of the body' and so live, or, in other words, be glorified with Christ. If this is correct, then the suffering referred to is not suffering in general so much as that experienced directly because of faith, presumably at the hands of those offended by moral purity or opposed on religious grounds, or self-administered privation in refraining from sinful behaviour or attempting to meet the needs of others or to preach the gospel, or even simply the suffering brought on by the failure to resist sin. Then the suffering does not indicate a condition of un-

righteousness or wickedness, as would have been supposed according to the Old Testament. Rather, such suffering is an unavoidable consequence of being in the Spirit, which is what determines whether or not one truly is a believer (8:9), on the way to enjoying the life with God that Jesus now enjoys.

8:18-39

'The suffering of this present time', during which the fulfilment of what is anticipated is not yet complete, so that the believer must struggle to live by the Spirit whilst the power of sin is still effective and able to take hold again, working through what is still under its Lordship to undermine and usurp the Lordship of the Creator, 'are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed' (8:18). The negative experiences of the believers, which perhaps seem to call into question the reality of the gospel's claim, or tempt them to feel that sticking to the faith is not worth the effort, are transitory and quite insignificant from the ultimate point of view. What follows suggests that 'the glory that is to be revealed', of which Paul is here thinking, is not simply the glory of God alone that they are going to see fully, nor that which is to be imparted to them, but that which will ultimately be shared and displayed by the whole creation.¹⁹⁴

In 8:19-23 Paul depicts the creation itself as somehow sharing the frustration and impatience of the believers. It is hardly likely that Paul actually thought of the creation, apart from human beings, as feeling emotion. Attempts to get around this by taking creation to mean human beings alone do not, however, do justice to Paul's meaning. Rather, it would seem that Paul is consciously using poetic language to convey to his readers something of the magnitude of the process in which they are involved. Against the enormous backdrop of the Creator's working with and for his creation, the difficulties endured by individuals and small communities of believers are only a very small part of the whole struggle that is going on. In thus rejecting the idea that the creation literally longs or groans, we do not exclude the actual involvement of creation apart from man. We merely suggest that this is passive rather than active.

Paul does not abandon the traditions he has inherited which, as we have seen, look

forward to a transformation of the natural world along with the transformation which is the redemption of man. It would appear, however, that he sees a more direct connection between the two. In Deutero-Isaiah the re-creation of nature is expected to be carried out by the Creator, apparently to provide for his redeemed people, to ensure their preservation and continuance. In the Apocryphal tradition it was expected that the present world would be destroyed along with the wicked, and an entirely new world created for the righteous who would be saved. Paul, however, seems to be saying that the redemption of man brings about the renewal of creation. He speaks of the creation being subjected. This presumably is an allusion to Gen 1:26,28 which says that God created man in his image and granted him Lordship over the rest of creation. This was the realm in which man was to exercise the divine power which was his as God's image. It was the will of the Creator that man should rule the creation in such a way that it would reflect his glory. But because Man is under the power of sin he is not able to do this. Just as man, when he does not live under the Lordship of his Creator, is unable to be as he was created to be, so the rest of creation, under the lordship of corrupted man who is unable to know the glory of God, cannot be as it was created to be. It is 'subjected to futility' (8:20), unable to fulfill its purpose of showing forth the glory of the Creator.

Thus the situation of the creation can be likened to the situation of the believers. Through the Spirit in them they know what they were intended to be, or what they are assured they will be. While they are limited, prevented by their bodily nature from being so, they experience frustration and long for the completion of the transformation by which they will be instated as sons of God. So the creation, in itself as it should be, must wait until the limitation of having inadequate rulers is removed, as it will be when men do become sons of God, so that it too can be as it should be.

It was in the hope that this change would take place that believers were rescued from their plight, through God's action in Jesus Christ (8:24f). They are not saved for their sakes alone. Nor is it only their inner selves or spirits that are to be transformed. The indwelling of the Spirit is only the first step towards the transformation which the Creator intends to bring about for the whole physical creation, including physical man. If this had already taken place, and could be

seen, then it would not be a hope but a reality. Thus is it absurd to lose hope because what is hoped for has not yet come. Rather, ~~to~~ hope means to wait with patience, like Abraham, for that which is promised, without being put off or weakening in faith because from a human point of view there are no indications that what is hoped for can come about.

Along with the knowledge and logic that tell the believer not to waver in faith in the face of apparent contradiction, there is the indwelling Spirit. While in human weakness the believer is inclined to give up because his hope is not fulfilled, the Spirit in him enables him to set his hope beyond his own immediate concern. When the broad scope of God's purpose is beyond comprehension or words, the Spirit communicates to God on the believers' behalf, asking for what God would wish them to ask (8:26f). Believers may therefore be confident that all is well, although present suffering seems to indicate otherwise. Through the Spirit their real needs are known to God, whom they can trust. They 'know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose' (8:28). The very fact that they love God is proof that he is working for them, since otherwise they would not know him at all. In calling them he creates them, making them people in whom he works out his purpose.

The believers have, in fact, already experienced this working out of God's purpose in their own lives. Though he knew them as sinful, fallen men, alienated from him, he determined to recreate them as his sons by granting them what he had granted Jesus Christ, so that the new relationship with this man might be the beginning of a new order of men in relationship with him. Having so determined, he called them, thereby creating them as people who knew him and responded to him in faith and so glorified him, and were in their turn glorified. Here, in contradiction of the idea that glorification is yet to come, Paul emphasizes what has happened, in so far as it has, in order to focus on the positive side of Christian experience. Whilst all may not be as they would wish, they cannot deny that they have had at least a taste of what is to come.

In 8:31-39, in rhetorical and somewhat dramatic terms, Paul brings his argument to a climax which embraces the whole of the preceding discussion begun at 1:18. Following straight on from the affirmation of 8:28-30, Paul can confidently declare

'God is for us' and challenge any to suggest some opposition (8:31). This is not just a declaration that God is more powerful than any other contender. Since, according to 8:28, God is at work for good 'in everything', there is nothing that does not, one way or another, contribute towards the outworking of his purpose for his people. Even the most negative things, from a human point of view, are used to further his work. This is demonstrated supremely in the death of Jesus. The reference to this in 8:32 is formulated in such a way as to convey several points with remarkable economy of words. Spelled out, the argument would go as follows: You think that, as believers, you should not suffer. You see your suffering as an indication of the failure of faith in the present and as reason to doubt the future fulfilment of what it promises. But look at Jesus. He, the Son of God, was not spared suffering. In fact it was his very suffering that opened up the opportunity for you to believe and enjoy the benefits that faith in him brings, since through it he condemns the sin which plagues you. If God has gone to such lengths, and used such a method for your sakes, surely the end result of your suffering will be equivalent to the end result of Jesus' suffering. He suffered, and now he has been made Lord of all. Surely it follows that God will treat you likewise. Far from being a counterforce, the suffering you endure as believers is itself an integral part of the Creator's saving work for his creation.

Continuing in rhetorical style, Paul takes up again the question of sin (8:33f). Once more he works from the affirmation of 8:28-30. The believers have been chosen by God, created as his people. If they have been taken on by the righteous God, no-one can be in a position to bring them to trial for unrighteousness. If the judge himself has acquitted them, it is impossible that they should be condemned by someone or something less than God, such as the law. In fact the reverse is the case. Christ Jesus, the very one who dies because of sin, and was raised and put in a position of power and intimacy with God in affirmation of his overcoming of sin, actually pleads the believers' cause, speaking on their behalf those things that they, because of their sinfulness, are unable to articulate. If death itself, brought on by man's sin, cannot come between Christ and those who believe in him to stop him relating to them and acting on their behalf, then no other sort of suffering is likely to (8:35). Rather, what is suffered is suffered for his sake. By his power, given through the Holy Spirit, believers can endure suffering and remain faithful and so be the means by which he effects in the world the

overcoming of sin which he achieved in his own death (8:37). No single thing that might conceivably threaten to attack the believers, or demand their allegiance, can cut off the power given them because of their faith in an allegiance to Christ Jesus, power which is the means of present relationship with God, and guarantee of its future consummation.

Before moving onto the new and rather different issues raised in chaps. 9ff, we direct our attention once more to the reconstruction of the historical situation to which Paul appears to be writing. At the end of chap. 4 we were able to postulate that there were Jewish Christian and Gentile Christian groups in conflict with each other, the Gentiles undervaluing the significance of Judaism, the Jews overvaluing it and giving it priority over the gospel. In particular, it seemed that the Jewish Christians were critical of the moral behaviour of the Gentile Christians. They saw the immorality of the Gentiles as an indication of the inadequacy of Gentile Christianity and were arguing that the Gentiles should put themselves under the law in order to guarantee their salvation. From 4:19ff we conclude that Paul may have regarded the Jewish Christian concern with the law as a weakening of faith.

Chaps. 5-8 confirm and to some extent further clarify this interpretation. From Paul's emphasis on what has been achieved by God through Jesus Christ and the Spirit, we conclude that the Jewish Christian concern and questioning arose not simply from their observation of the Gentiles' immorality and their desire to maintain their traditions in an exclusivist way. From their own experience they were seriously doubting the effectiveness or reality of the gospel. They were interpreting the continuing presence of sin and suffering in their lives as proof that they were still in conflict with God and in real danger of being condemned as unrighteous. If anything, their faith in the gospel only made things worse by increasing their suffering. Faith in Jesus had not given them the life of harmony for which they had hoped and should perhaps be given up as a bad job. A return to orthodox Judaism could well make life easier for them, and give them a better chance of escaping final condemnation.

On the other hand, Paul's emphasis on the need to fight against sin suggests that the problem amongst the Gentile members of the community was very real. It

was not just that their behaviour did not come up to the standards of the Jewish law. Rather, it would appear that their confidence in the victory won by Christ was such that they saw no reason to avoid sin, and may even have been going out of their way to be immoral in order to taunt the Jews and boast about the extraordinary power of the God who had saved them. It is these two areas of misunderstandings to which Paul seems to have been addressing himself in these chapters.

So far, then, Paul has tackled the Jewish Christian attitude to the Gentile Christians and to the gospel, and the Gentile Christian attitude to the gospel. In chap. 9 he begins to deal with the attitudes of both groups to the place of the Jews in relation to the gospel. We take it that this discussion is prompted by the situation in Rome, and not simply Paul's argument concerning the law, or his personal concern for the Jews, though these probably provide some of the motivation and content, in particular of the opening paragraph.

9:1-33

Paul raises the subject by declaring in the strongest possible terms his concern for the Jewish race (9:1-3). His criticism of them does not amount to rejection. On the contrary, he would go so far as to wish he had not come to have known Christ if that would have meant that they would have. After all, it had been through them that all God's attempts to bring reconciliation with mankind had come. Of the things that God has done for the Jews, the first two things which Paul lists, sonship and glory, are of particular interest to us. As we have seen, these are the gifts given to believers. What God made available to the Israelites is no different from what he now makes available to all through Jesus Christ. Then, as now, his purpose was to enable man to be conformed to the life intended for him at creation. By 'the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises' he provided unique opportunities for the Israelites to know him, trust him as Lord, and give glory to him. He created men who did this, 'the patriarchs', to provide them with leadership. Even his most recent action, his revelation of himself in what he did in Christ, was made from within the Jewish race. For this special favour shown to the Jews, God, 'who is over all' is to be

'blessed forever'.

For believers, a reasonable rejoinder to this would be to query why all this activity on God's part appears to have been unfruitful, since the majority of Israelites remain unfaithful, and to suggest that these things have been ineffective, perhaps with the implication that Judaism no longer had any role to play, or any claim to special relationship with God. Something like this would appear to be behind Paul's statement in 9:6, 'But it is not as though the word of God had failed.' It is interesting that Paul uses the expression 'word of God', apparently to sum up the things listed in 9:4f. As we have seen, this term is used in Jewish literature to describe God's creative activity, emphasizing his extraordinary power and implying creation out of nothing. Paul thus indicates that the favour shown to Israel is creative. When God addressed them in the various ways described he was actually making something of them. He did not fail in this. The idea that he did comes from a misunderstanding of his way of operating.

In 9:6b-13 Paul explains this. As he has already shown in 2:28f and 4:13ff, there is a distinction to be made between Israelites by race and Israelites as God's chosen people. Being born within the race is not a guarantee of chosenness, despite circumcision and the knowledge of what God has said in the covenants, the law and the promises, and irrespective of what one has or has not done. As can be seen from the examples in scripture of the children of Sarah and of Rebecca, God has always chosen people in a way which, from a human point of view, is entirely arbitrary. It is only some of the race, those who actually receive the promise, who are true Israelites in the sense of being God's chosen people. God does not use human criteria because it is his intention that people should not belong to him by their own efforts but by his call which makes them his. Just as in chaps. 3 and 4 justification by faith was shown to be God's way, in contrast to justification by works, here election is by call, not by works. Election is not something one can claim, but something one receives. If a person is chosen, it is by the gracious creative activity of God which brings him into relation with his Creator. Thus the continuing existence of unfaithful Jews is not to be attributed to a failure on God's part, but to the fact that not every Jew has been directly addressed by him.

9:14-18 deals with the obvious objection that this arbitrary favouring of some and not others is unjust. Paul rejects this utterly, though he does not actually show how it can be regarded as just. He simply asserts, again citing scripture, that this is the way God behaves. Once more the reason Paul gives is that it is entirely God, and not man or what man does, that should be the determinative and effective factor. In this case, in accordance with the scripture quotation, Paul speaks of God's mercy. This is a new term, but it successfully conveys the idea that it is God acting graciously to those who have no right or claim, nor anything to offer, thus paralleling the ideas of justification of the ungodly, creation out of nothing and resurrection of the dead. In this case, however, Paul goes a step further in explaining why God acts as he does. As in the case of Pharoah, his purpose in making something out of people who are nothing in themselves, is to show forth his power, 'so that *his* name may be proclaimed in all the earth'(9:17).

It is difficult to see how this argument really answers the objection. Certainly, if God's favour is given independently of human criteria then credit must be given to him alone, but it is not clear why this is done selectively, unless it is specifically God's purpose that the majority of mankind should be brought to acknowledge him through the proclamation of him by the chosen ones. Since God 'hardens the hearts' (9:18) of those he does not choose, as we saw in 1:21, it must be that proclamation is an exercising of the divine power given to the chosen which breaks through this hardening. Otherwise proclamation would be pointless. Paul, however, does not spell out this reasoning. He simply ends by repeating his basic point that God chooses or rejects men at will.

At the same time he seems to realize that he has not provided a satisfactory explanation, and so acknowledges that his assertion gives rise to a further objection (9:19). If a man's response is so completely determined by God, as it is, then it is hardly fair that he should be held to blame for something over which he has no control. To this Paul has no real answer. He can do no more than resort to an assertion that God has the right to run his affairs as he chooses. Using the more concrete metaphor of God the Creator as potter, moulding man the creature out of clay, he argues once more that God's treatment of man is the exercising of this legitimate right over his creation, which man has no real choice but to accept and acknowledge, having no basis for claim upon his Creator, nor

right to protest. The Creator is free to exercise and thus demonstrate his power in the form of wrath against some, in order that it may be recognized for what it is and so experienced as glory by others, if that is the method he chooses (9:22f). As we saw in our study of Genesis and Deutero-Isaiah, recognition of God's right to behave in a way which is incomprehensible to man is fundamental to the creature-Creator relationship. So it is that, as in the past, according to Hosea and Isaiah, God now, in calling man to faith in Jesus Christ, shows his favour selectively, both within and beyond Judaism, in order to further his purpose for his creation (9:24ff).

Particularly incomprehensible from the Jewish-Christian point of view, is God's favouring of Gentiles, who had made no attempt at all to respond to him, ahead of the majority of a race he had chosen, whose members had at least tried to meet his requirements. Paul comments on this in 9:30-33, reiterating some of his earlier argument. The Gentiles, without seeking it, have attained the righteousness offered to them, righteousness by faith. The Jews, despite their efforts, have not attained the righteousness offered them, righteousness based on the law. This is because they fail to recognize that this righteousness, too, is in fact righteousness by faith. They think that the righteousness expressed in the keeping of the law is attained by trying to follow the instruction laid down, whereas in fact it can be attained only by faith. It is by receiving righteousness through faith that the possibility of fulfilling the law comes. Because of their false presupposition, the majority of Jews have not responded to the gospel. Since they give priority to works over faith, God's new initiative, which makes Jesus Christ the object of faith, does not evoke a response from them. Interpreting this composite scripture quotation christologically, Paul indicates that Jesus Christ in fact shows up their lack of faith in the Creator, and hence their alienation from the God they claim to serve as his chosen people. It is only those who believe in Jesus Christ who will be found to be righteous, and spared shame, at the final judgement.

The terms Paul uses here once more show their interchangeability and interrelatedness to each other and to the idea of God as Creator. The Creator shows his power as wrath or as mercy. Wrath effects destruction. Its converse is creative. What mercy effects is variously described as being called, seeing and being prepared for glory, and attaining righteousness. As we have seen, these are all ways

of saying that these people have been brought back into relationship with their Creator, able to acknowledge him and look forward to ultimate reinstatement as his image, sons sharing his creative power.

10:1-21

Although Paul understands why the majority of the Jewish people have not taken up the Christian faith, this does not stop him from sincerely hoping they yet will, and interceding on their behalf to that effect. For their failure is not due to any lack of willingness or desire to be pleasing to God, but to lack of understanding of how to be so. It is because they thought they had to make themselves righteous, instead of relying on God, that they have missed the point of the gospel, which declares that Christ ends the need to keep the law, so that everyone, not just those who know the law, may be justified because of their faith. Those who think righteousness is based on the law are ruled by the law. But those who know righteousness is based on faith do not concern themselves with explanations or proofs or impossibilities. They know righteousness is immediately accessible. It is sufficient to acknowledge Jesus as Lord, and believe 'that God raised him from the dead', since then one is under the Creator's Lordship, exercised by the risen Jesus, and acknowledging the Creator's power, and thus righteous. Anyone who does this will not be found wanting at the final judgement, irrespective of whether they do or do not know the law. For the Lord of the Jews is Lord of all, the Creator, who gives his gracious gifts or righteousness and glory to all who, by calling on him, admit their dependence on him and so acknowledge him as Lord.

Obviously men are not going to depend on something unless they believe in it. In 10:14-21 Paul points out the need to make the gospel known, in particular, in this context, to the Jews. The Jews can come to faith only if they hear the message of Christ from preachers sent to them. On the other hand, they have a long history of unresponsiveness. In Old Testament times preachers were sent to them, God attempted to make his message plain by making them jealous and demonstrating his power by evoking a response from those who had not sought him, but Israel continued to turn away or misunderstand.

The picture painted for Judaism so far is rather black. The race that believed itself to be the one chosen by God for the outworking of his purposes learns that, while this was true, it was true only for selected individuals, while the majority were operating under a complete misconception of what their purpose was and how it should be effected. At the same time, God had also been working out his purpose beyond the confines of Israel, and now appeared to be bypassing the Jews altogether, because of their failure to understand and respond appropriately. In this chapter, Paul argues that God has not in fact given up on Israel, but continues to work through and with them in two different ways.

Paul sums up the problem with the question, 'has God rejected his people?' and answers with an emphatic denial, which he then explains. The first piece of evidence that God has not rejected his people is Paul himself, a Jew who, as a believer in Jesus Christ, is clearly not rejected. As in the past, so now, God has selected some whom he has made faithful to him. But, also as in the past, this is entirely God's doing, a creative act of grace independent of the former action and attitude of those selected. The second piece of evidence is the use God has made of those not so selected. Those whom he has hardened instead of making them faithful are serving God's purpose in that because of their failure he has inaugurated his new, direct means of bringing the Gentiles into relationship with him, which at the same time would bring the hardened to their senses through jealousy, and so bring his purpose to completion. Thus by a direct creative act towards a few Jews, and through them to the Gentiles, he is indirectly creating his whole new people, consisting of both Gentiles and Jews, all believers in Jesus Christ.

This task of indirectly bringing the Jewish people into the community of believers is a fundamental part of the mission to the Gentiles which was the focus of Paul's work. This is a fact which the Gentile Christians ought to remember. It is very much to their advantage that these Jews have been unresponsive, so ought to be appreciated rather than regarded as a reason for boasting or for feeling superior. The indebtedness of Gentile Christians to Judaism is on two levels. Firstly, Judaism forms the foundation of their current status. Even though the majority

of Jews remain unfaithful, unrighteous, and in ignorance of God's righteousness, it is nevertheless through Judaism that God did what he did for them in Jesus Christ, and because these Jews were cut off from him that he did this. Secondly, their future status is affected by these alienated Jews in that God's purpose will not be brought to completion until these Jews do join them as believers, since God will remain faithful to his promise to them. While Gentile believers may rejoice at the present reconciliation with God, the full life, as sons of God sharing his glory, for which they hope, will be theirs only when the Jews, too, have been freed from their current hardness of heart. So, rather than falling into the same trap that the Jews fell into, of boasting in an exclusivist way about their status before God, they ought to remember that this status is given to them through faith, and that they are entirely dependent on God's grace, mercy or kindness, from which they are in equal danger of falling if they forget this and imagine that it is through some right or claim that they have been justified. If God has the power to recreate them, who know nothing of him, how much more has he the power to recreate those who have long been involved in the working out of his purpose.

Paul completes his discussion of the place of Judaism within God's current plan of salvation with a further reminder of the sameness of the situation for all men. 11:32a sums up 1:18-28. Because all men have failed to acknowledge the Creator and live under his Lordship, and have chosen instead to disobey him, he has made them helpless victims of their disobedience, consigning them to a life ruled by the alternative Lords they have chosen. At first sight this seems rather harsh, until it is recognized that the stated punishment was death. By delaying the exercising of this punishment, and instead putting men in a position where they could know that they were destined for death, he was able to exercise his mercy effectively in that he could demonstrate his extraordinary creative power in rescuing them from their helplessness, and so receive the acknowledgement which is rightfully his. Since acknowledging God as God is the essence of righteousness, God's purpose for mankind could be attained only if righteousness, and hence rescue from death was made available in a way that gave no room for credit being given to any being or thing other than the Creator himself. Thus 11:32 is, in effect, a reassertion that the God in question is one who justifies the ungodly, creates out of nothing and resurrects the dead, this being a description of the way he does

act, rather than simply an affirmation about what he can do.

That it is in terms of God's activity as Creator that Paul is thinking, is confirmed by 11:33-36. The praise here ascribed to God is the praise which the Old Testament writers ascribed to him specifically as Creator¹⁹⁵, and the concluding verse is a clear affirmation that he is Creator, still involved in the creative activity of giving and sustaining all things, with a unique right and claim to glory.

Paul's argument in chaps. 9-11 confirms and extends our reconstruction of the likely situation in Rome to which he addressing himself. A further dimension to the weakening of faith of the Jewish Christians appears to arise from a questioning about the significance of their past, and above all, about the place and continuing existence as non-believers of the majority of their race. Not only did the gospel appear to fail on the evidence of immorality amongst Gentile Christians, and their own continuing experience of sin and suffering, but also in that most Jews had not responded to it. The difficulty of reconciling their new faith, which appeared to have no place for Judaism, and even to reject it outright, with their conviction that Israel was indeed the Creator's chosen people, presumably was tempting them to return to the faith of their fathers. The apparent contradiction between the proclaimed power of the God of the gospel, and his seeming impotence in regard to the saving, in gospel terms, of the Jews, would naturally cast doubts on the claim that this God was indeed the faithful covenant God of Israel. Faced with such a possibility, the Jewish Christians would almost certainly have opted to maintain their allegiance to the God of the Jews rather than some other. Hence Paul's concern to show that the gospel confirmed the faithfulness of God to his covenant promises and his continuing work with and through and for them in effecting his purpose for mankind and the world.

In 11:12ff we get the first clear confirmation of our postulation, made on the basis of the formula in 1:3f, that the Gentile Christians were undervaluing the significance of Judaism. In fact it would appear that they were actively scornful of Judaism, perhaps believing that God had given up the Jews and decided to elect them instead, rather than as well, and boasting to that effect. Their immorality may have been as much to flaunt their supposed superiority over the law-keeping Jews, as a simple underestimation and misunderstanding of the demands of the

gospel that accompanied its gift. This boasting may even have verged on the exclusivism which reckoned it a waste of time and effort to continue missionary preaching of the gospel to the Jews, an attitude which would almost certainly have created conflict in a mixed community of Jewish and Gentile Christians. Paul, as we have seen, counters this attitude by affirming both the past and future importance of Israel in God's plan of salvation for the world.

12:1-15:13

It is generally agreed that chap. 12 begins a new section, containing exhortation regarding daily living, in the epistle. While this is certainly true, the division between this and the rest of the letter, and in particular the preceding chapter, is not as sharp as some maintain. The beginning of chap. 12 follows directly from the conclusion of chap. 11. Because, as Paul has argued from several angles throughout the epistle, and summed up in 11:32, all believers have equal status before God, received from him who is the Creator, to whom glory should be given, divisions and immorality are inappropriate within the community. 12:1f reminds them to put themselves under the Lordship of God rather than sin. 12:3-10 encourages them to remember their equality and not be divided by jealousies or claims to superiority. 12:11-21 calls on them not to weaken in faith under suffering, to live out the peace they have from God and not be ruled by the demands of the natural inclinations of the flesh.

Chap. 13 appears to speak in particular to the Gentile Christian assumption that morality was not a necessary part of the gospel, encouraging them to abide by the civil and moral laws that they had been flaunting, as befits those who live under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and not of the flesh. Chap. 14 calls on them not to judge each other, in particular in matters of faith and ways of living it out, but simply to concern themselves with their own faithfulness and expression of that in the service of the Lord. 15:1-13 continues on the same lines, emphasizing again the significance of what Judaism has to offer, and calling for recognition of the place the Gentiles had always had in God's plan, and so advocating harmony between the two groups, the sort of eschatological harmony demanded in the Old Testament in which neighbours and the weak are supported and cared for.

The end of all this is to give glory to God which, as 1:18ff indicates, is what the Creator intended man to do, and what constitutes righteousness.

This very sketchy outline of the practical issues with which Paul is concerned, confirms our reconstruction of the historical situation and our conviction that Paul structured his letter with a knowledge of it. Each piece of advice given here relates directly to one or more of the doctrinal arguments in chaps. 1-11. Each of the issues raised in chaps. 1-11 are relevant to one or more of the problems of practical community life which Paul discusses. Conflict between Jewish and Gentile groups over morality, status and relative strength of faith is to give way to life which, through the creative gifts made available by the Holy Spirit to those who have faith in Jesus Christ, reflects the peace which belongs to those who, through giving glory to God, are as they were created to be, living in right relationship with the Lord of all, the Creator.

Paul concludes this heading of exhortation with a doxology (15:13) which in a sense acknowledges the difficulty of the community is likely to have in living up to his advice in that its emphasis is on hope. As we saw in 4:18ff, hope is the essence of faith. It is that attitude which believes when human judgement sees no reason to hope, and grows stronger as it is held onto, because in hoping one gives glory to God and so receives the power and peace which belong to those who do. So Paul's wish for the Romans is that they may maintain their faith, their hope that God will do as he promises, so that they joy and peace accordingly given them by the Holy Spirit may empower them to grow ever more hopeful.

15:14-33

Having thus given his theological and practical advice for the solving of conflict and confusion within the Roman community, Paul now returns to the more personal tone with which he began (1:8ff), thinking again of his own position in relation to the Romans. He once more, almost apologetically, compliments his readers, while at the same time justifying his having written to them as he has. The fact that he claims the right to write to them because God has made him 'minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles' may at first sight be seen as evidence

against our view that he is writing to both Jewish and Gentile Christians. Nevertheless, the frequent reference to particular Jewish issues throughout the letter seem to us to be stronger evidence for our view than this is against it. As we noted at the beginning of our discussion, Paul's somewhat tentative offering of advice could well be attributed to an overstepping of this role, in service of the whole church and, more importantly, the gospel of God, as opposed to any narrower gospel specifically to the Gentiles. The argument concerning the inter-related roles of Jews and Gentiles in the purpose of God, which Paul spells out in chaps. 9-11, further support our view, and enable us to make sense of 15:16-18. Paul's particular ministry has been to the Gentiles. Those whom he has won to the faith, by the working of Christ through him, are his offering, made pure by the work of the Holy Spirit in them, towards the total purpose and work of God of bringing all nations, including the Jews brought in through jealousy of these very Gentiles, to obedience. His pride in his work lies in the fact that he has contributed, through this work, to the total purpose for which he was set aside, as we saw in 1:5. The depicting of this contribution as an acceptable offering made in priestly service would be particularly meaningful to those of Jewish background. We take this to be further confirmation of our view that his hesitancy is due to the presence of Jewish Christians in Rome. It is especially to them that he has to justify his having written, in view of his having agreed to be apostle to the Gentiles only.

In 15:18b-22 Paul then elaborates a little the means and extent of what Christ has wrought through him in order to make this contribution. Because of this particular calling, his efforts have been directed to winning new converts rather than to maintaining or extending the faith of those already won by others. The task has required that he cover a great deal of territory and so has prevented him from visiting Rome. 15:23-29 cover Paul's plans to visit Rome on the way to Spain, after a visit to Jerusalem, and concludes with a request for prayer in view of the difficulties Paul expects to encounter before he is able to join them.

16:1-27

There is much debate as to whether this chapter was part of the original letter or not, and whether or not the final doxology was written by Paul himself. These questions need not concern us greatly here, since there can be no doubt that the chapter and the doxology are in harmony with the rest of the letter and do not raise new issues. The many greetings in 16:1-16 indicate that Paul had many friends in Rome, which adds support to our view that Paul was writing to a situation about which he had considerable information. He may even have had pressing invitations to visit the community there, which would explain why he makes excuses for not having visited them already. 16:17-20 repeat very briefly the practical concerns of the rest of the letter: a reminder that disunity is contrary to the gospel, so that those who cause or advocate conflict ought to be avoided, commendation of the Roman Christians coupled with justification for the letter; the assurance that their hope is not in vain, despite present sin.

The final doxology (16:25-27) brings out once more the main points of Paul's theological discussion in the form of affirmations about God. That he will give strength to those who believe in him is affirmed in the gospel, by the preaching of Jesus Christ, and by the knowledge they now have about God's purpose for mankind, which had remained a mystery until the present time, but now has been revealed at God's command. This revelation shows how and why they have been helpless for so long, and so how and why they can now escape condemnation by living the life of obedience of faith for which they were created. This God, whose ways have been a mystery, and still remain fundamentally incomprehensible to human reason, is the only wise God, the Creator, to whom glory is due, and can now, through Jesus Christ, be given.

Concluding Remarks

The purpose for which the gospel revelation is given, according to 16:26, is 'to bring about the obedience of faith'. This takes us back to Paul's statement in 1:5 in which he says he had 'received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations'. When we

discussed this verse, we observed that the meaning of *ὑπακοὴν πίστεως* was not clear from the context, so that all we could say was that it seemed likely that faith and obedience were issues with which Paul was going to concern himself in the course of the letter. From our discussion we can now affirm that this was indeed the case, unless our interpretation is seriously misguided.

The meaning of the expression has now also become more apparent. Disobedience is refusal to obey the command of God, the Creator who alone has the right to make commands. Disobedience amounts to a refusal to accept his Lordship and thereby acknowledge him as God. The Old Testament illustrates this with the story of Adam choosing to eat of the tree from which he was commanded not to eat. Throughout the Old Testament and writings of later Judaism there is an awareness of, and concern about, this disobedience and frequent calls to the people of Israel to turn back to God and righteousness. What the gospel reveals is that this cannot be done in the way thought. Man cannot of himself turn back to God because God in his wrath responded to man's disobedience by darkening his mind, so that he was incapable of knowing God, and making him subject to sin, to those things to which man chose to accord Lordship. This barrier prevents man from turning back to God and so being righteous, since righteousness is defined, not in terms of sinless behaviour, but as acknowledgement of God. It keeps man from being obedient, no matter how hard he tries, because he is unable to know the commands which he is to obey.

This was not done out of sheer maliciousness of God's part. The only way man could be as he was intended was if he realized his total dependence on his Creator. Only this would constitute true acknowledgement of the God who alone creates and sustains all things. If there were some way that man could of his own volition become what he was intended to be, pulling himself up by his own bootstraps, then he would imagine he had some right or claim on God. In fact there could be no such way, since it is the Creator alone who has the power to make something out of nothing, to bring the dead to life, to justify the ungodly. Such action, which is what the rescue of man involves, could not be possible for man, and must not be, if God is, and is to be recognized as, sole Creator and Lord.

The only effective rescue operation is one in which God provides the power, and

man is fully aware that this is so. This happens when God breaks through the barrier of sin and alienation and calls man to faith in him. This he has done selectively through the ages, and now does through Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ all men can see what God can and does do. They can see man as he was intended to be. The gospel message is that God has offered to do the same for any who believes he has done what he has done in Jesus. Believing this is to be regarded by God as sufficient acknowledgement of him, as righteousness. Since the righteous know God and what he commands, and share his power, those who have faith in God, through Jesus Christ, receive as the Holy Spirit the knowledge and power which alone enable them to be obedient. Thus the 'obedience of faith' is that obedience to the commands of God which constitutes acknowledgement of him as Lord, in accordance with his right as Creator, that is possible only to those who put their trust in him.

Another point which we passed over earlier, but which can now be clarified, is the idea that 'real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal' (2:29). As we saw in Rom 4, circumcision was the sign given to Abraham to confirm publicly that God had reckoned him righteous because of his faith, in effect as an invitation to others to have such faith. The law was intended for those justified by faith to live by. Both were means of publicly giving glory to God and thereby furthering his purposes. Instead they were taken to be guarantees of salvation exclusive to the Jews, were accorded more glory than God himself, and effectively communicated to outsiders, and the Jews themselves, that righteousness was earned by works.

Presumably for this reason, the righteousness which is reckoned to those who have faith in Jesus Christ carries no such physical sign, no written code for them to live by. The sign of their justification, their 'real circumcision', whether they are physically circumcised or not, is the Holy Spirit in their hearts (8:9). This combines the roles of circumcision and the law in that it is both sign of and guide for their life of obedience. At the same time it is internal, and so cannot be used as the basis for human judgement nor understood as a guarantee of salvation irrespective of attitude to God, since in the absence of faith it does not exist. Thus it is a sign for God alone, he who has sole right, as Creator, to judge who is righteous and who is not. The only public witness to justification is the Spirit-led

life which gives glory to God.

This brings to completion our discussion of Romans, at least within the parameters we set ourselves. Our purpose was to look at the role played by the concept of God specifically as Creator. We have found that, when we approach the letter from this angle, the concept can provide a key to the interpretation of almost every other concept, and a basis for almost every theological explanation that Paul offers. Righteousness, wrath, sin, judgement, death, resurrection, justification, faith, hope, grace, Spirit, glory, peace, reconciliation, Lordship, obedience, salvation history and promise can all be directly or indirectly related to the work of God as Creator. Likewise the roles of Jesus Christ, the Gentiles, the Jews, the law and circumcision, and the ethical demands of the gospel can be explained in this context. At this stage, it is only the important concept of being baptized into Christ, and the relation of this to sin, that have not yet been related to creation in some sense. In particular, we have been able to regard resurrection and justification essentially as creative acts making a fundamental contribution to the overall purpose of the Creator for his creation. It remains to be seen whether our interpretation of these terms can be upheld by study of resurrection and justification in their own right, and whether we can go so far as to say, with Käsemann, that these are in fact one and the same action.

The question of the centre of Pauline theology is more difficult. Part of the difficulty lies in the definition of the term 'centre' itself. It is probably true to say that one could define 'centre' in such a way as to suit whatever one wished to propose as centre. There can be no doubt that Christology, the role of Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection, is of utmost importance as the distinctive feature that marks Christianity off from Judaism. Faith plays an essential role as the means of participating in the religion. Being in Christ is regarded by some as central in that it provides access to the benefits of salvation, including freedom from sin. If, however, we take 'centre of theology' to mean the most important or essential thing that Paul wants to tell his hearers about God, a broader understanding seems to be more appropriate, especially if some degree of continuity with the Old Testament is to be retained.

While admitting the inevitable bias that the predetermined direction of our study

of Romans gives, it does seem that the message that God is Creator is at least a strong contender for the designation 'centre of Pauline theology'. At least in Romans, this concept provides a framework and motivation for all else. All that happens in and because of Jesus Christ can be seen to be expressly for the purpose of enabling men to know who God is and what he requires so that the creation can ultimately be as he, the Creator, intended it to be. All proclamation, explanation and exhortation can be seen to be directed to this end, and in this sense, to have as its centre the fact that God is Creator.

Chapter 3

The God who Justifies the Ungodly

3.1 The Concept in some Background Literature

Our investigation of the role of the idea of God as 'him who justifies the ungodly' in Paul's epistle to the Romans begins with a study of some of the background material which may have influenced Paul's understanding of the concept and its significance. In looking at the idea of God justifying, we involve ourselves in a word group which appears frequently throughout the Old Testament and later Jewish writings, so that a comprehensive study is not possible here. We shall therefore limit ourselves to a sample of instances. In doing this, we shall endeavour to do justice to the concept while at the same time concentrating primarily on those aspects which seem particularly relevant to our study of Romans.

3.1.1 The Old Testament

Our starting point is the Old Testament. Here we proceed on the basis of the conclusions of such scholars as Watson and Ziesler¹ that the meaning of *δικαίω* and cognates in the Septuagint is substantially the same, and determined by, the meaning of the *פָּדָא* word group in the Hebrew. This means that we take it that there is no need to distinguish on linguistic grounds between the understanding of the ancient Israelites and that of Paul.

The text to which Paul appeals when he designates God as 'him who justifies the ungodly' is Gen 15:6, 'And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.' According to Westermann², this verse forms the conclusion, and climax, of a small unit, Gen 15:1-6, within the Abraham saga. In the compilation of the traditions, as we have it in Genesis, Abraham had already been promised that he would be father of a great nation, greatly blessed, and possessor of the land of Canaan, and had responded positively to this promise. It would appear that Gen 15:1-6 is a small piece of narrative, built around a strand of ancient tradition which depicts the promise of descendants in the terms of Gen 15:5, with the rest of the unit being the work of a later redactor. The fact that this unit contains virtually no action suggests this, and the content appears to confirm it.

Westermann³ argues that the point being made here is one which was important in the later monarchial period, in particular in Isaiah's time. Prior to Isaiah, he argues, the verb אָמַן , to believe, was usually negated, since believing the word of God was normal and only disbelief would be worth mentioning. It was when Isaiah was confronted with the disbelief of the king (Is 7) that the question of faith became an issue. Since at this time the existence of the nation was in jeopardy, and so faith in the promise uncertain, it was appropriate for the redactor to link the idea of faith with the promise to Abraham. This probable background needs to be taken into account in our understanding of Gen 15:6, though we cannot assume that Paul was conscious of, or concerned with, such background.

The scene behind the theological assertion of Gen 15:6 is set in the preceding verses. In a vision, the Lord assures Abraham of protection and great reward. Abraham, with amazing boldness, questions the value of this assurance in view of his childlessness. Without descendants, anything else the Lord might offer him is of little significance. In response, the Lord indicates to Abraham that he will have innumerable descendants. Despite the absence of any concrete evidence or reasonable basis for acceding to such a promise, Abraham believes God. It is this faith that is 'reckoned to him as righteousness'.

In seeking to glean something of who God is from this statement, we need to investigate the idea of 'reckoning' as well as the idea of 'righteousness'. In general usage, רָכַן , or λογίζεσθαι , has a range of meaning as does 'reckon' in English.

The nearest parallel to Gen 15:6, according to von Rad⁴, appears to be the usage in Lev 7:18b; 17:4. These verses come in the context of instruction concerning cultic ritual, and indicate the judgement which a priest is to make, on the Lord's behalf, when the required ritual is not followed. The priest is to decide whether or not a person's sacrifice or offering is to be reckoned, or credited, to his account. From Lev 1-4, von Rad concludes that the announcement of the priest's decision takes the form of a declaration: 'it is a burnt-offering', 'it is a gift-offering'. In addition, there are in Lev 13, pronouncements regarding leprosy. The priest makes an inspection and declares, 'he is clean' or 'he is unclean' or 'it is leprosy'.

When we apply this declaration from the cult to Gen 15:6b, it seems likely that an alternative way of saying Abraham's faith was 'reckoned to him as righteousness' would have been to have declared, 'it is righteousness' or 'he is righteous'. This means that we understand the reckoning to be a judgement of what *was* the case rather than a decision that Abraham's faith was acceptable as an equivalent to righteousness, or that Abraham himself was being viewed as something he was not, though נאמן can be used in these ways.⁵ The picture we have is of Yahweh, taking the role normally taken on his behalf by the priest, making a cultic judgement and *justly* deciding in Abraham's favour, the judgement being made not on Abraham's former ethical behaviour⁶ or human status, but on his attitude to the promises made to him, as demonstrated by his obedient response to God's seemingly absurd commands. In Yahweh's eyes, Abraham's faith *constituted* his righteousness.

From this rather exceptional situation, we conclude that the writer's intention was to indicate to his contemporaries that those who have faith in Yahweh's promises to Israel, despite indications that these are unlikely to be fulfilled, will be declared righteous by Yahweh himself, who can and does act independently of the cult and directly with his people, when he so chooses. We cannot from this claim that faith alone will be judged to be righteousness, but only that to the writer it was important to affirm the significance of such an attitude. A similar view of Gen 15:6 is taken by von Rad:

If it is there emphasized that faith was 'counted' as righteousness, this was certainly a striking and perhaps even revolutionary formulation for those contemporary with it. Because of its uncommon stamp, it

betrays the fact that in its day the question of what then is 'counted as righteousness' in the eyes of Yahweh was to some extent a living one, and had perhaps already become a problem; and it represents the thesis that taking Yahweh's promise seriously, and responding to it as something perfectly concrete, was the true attitude in relationship to Yahweh. On the other hand of course, we must not make the words absolute and exclusive, as if they ruled out any other possible way for men to exhibit righteousness, for they are of course bound up with Abraham's peculiar situation as the recipient of a promise with wide historical implications. Different situations might have demanded different expressions of faithfulness in relationship to Yahweh.⁷

With this conclusion, and in particular this quotation, we come to the question of how 'righteousness' is used in the Old Testament. In von Rad's view, "There is absolutely no concept in the Old Testament with so central a significance for all the relationships of human life as that of צדקה ."⁸ Certainly it is a term which can be applied to a man's interaction with God, his fellow man, and animals and the natural environment. It is generally agreed that '*righteousness*' is the term for appropriate behaviour, where what is appropriate or right is determined, not by any predefined set of absolute norms for behaviour, but by a particular relationship in particular circumstances. It is behaviour which is true to the claims made by the relationship in question, in meeting the demands which the specific situation makes on those involved.

Of particular interest to us at this point is the behaviour of men which may be regarded by God as righteousness, as behaviour befitting the relationship between men and God. References to this are relatively infrequent in the early, pre-exilic, writings of the Old Testament, though this is not to say that it was unimportant. Rather, it would appear that what was required was understood and accepted. It was only in the face of later uncertainty that the issue had to be raised and discussed.

An indication of what was understood to have been the prevailing view, in the earlier period of Israel's history, of what was considered in Israel to be righteousness before God, is given in Deut 6:20-25. In this passage it is explained how the Lord, the God of Israel, brought the people of Israel out of Egypt in order to preserve them and give them the land promised to them. This represents God's side

of the relationship. It indicates how the relationship was established and what further action Israel could expect from it. On Israel's side, the behaviour which is expected within the relationship is that Israel fear God, which, as Deut 6:13ff states, means relying on, obeying and remaining loyal to him, and him alone, by keeping the statutes and ordinances laid down (Deut 6:2). The fundamental demand for total loyalty is emphasized in the first commandment: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.' (Deut 6:4f) This was their response to, and acknowledgement of, the mighty power of God, exercised in his rescuing the nation from slavery in Egypt (6:20ff). Such behaviour, the Israelites believed, was what was appropriate within the relationship that their God had established with them: 'And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us' (Deut 6:25). Since this behaviour towards God is that demanded of the Israelites by the Sinai covenant, it could be said that righteousness is simply that behaviour which is in accordance with the terms of the currently operative covenant.

It is clear from the nature of the action which the Israelites expect from God in response to their covenant-keeping, their righteousness, that at this stage righteousness was viewed collectively. God's promise of land is given to the whole people, whose righteousness is judged collectively, not individually. This collective understanding applied not only to the whole people at any one time, but also across generations, so that a later generation might be held accountable for the unrighteousness of an earlier generation⁹ and so not receive the full benefits of the covenant. In addition, there does not appear to be any idea of degrees of righteousness. Either Israel is righteous or it is not. Such an understanding was possible since the cult provided means for making good individual or partial failure, so that as long as the people continued to participate in the cult it was possible for them to do what God commanded and so be considered righteous in his eyes.

With this idea of what 'righteousness' might mean, we return to Gen 15:6. When the writer says, 'And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness', we take it that this means that to believe the Lord was, in

the circumstances, the behaviour appropriate for Abraham to adopt within the particular relationship he had with God. When we take into account the probable time of writing of this passage, however, we see that the intention of the author was probably broader than this. It seems likely that he wished to tell the people of Israel, as they faced almost certain destruction, that they should take their lead from Abraham who, likewise, was faced with the almost certain discontinuation of his race. In such circumstances, those who were in covenant relationship with the Lord can most appropriately renew their side of the covenant by believing that he will renew his side, which includes the promise to preserve his people. Their faith will be reckoned as righteousness, and as such will guarantee their preservation, possession of the promised land, and rest, because God also is righteous, or, in other words, because God also behaves in a manner appropriate to the covenant relationship he has with his people.

To sum up thus far, we maintain that Gen 15:6 indicates that God will justify those who have faith, irrespective of their past behaviour, where the faith may be entirely new, or a renewal of previously abandoned faith. Either way this amounts to justification of the ungodly. This suggests that in this regard Judaism is consistent with the gospel.

The assumption that God could be counted on to be righteous is an essential part of Israel's understanding of itself and of other nations. In the early period, this righteousness of God took the form, in Israel's eyes, of saving acts in the nation's history. The behaviour of God appropriate to his relationship with Israel was that he would preserve his people, so that victories over external enemies were celebrated as demonstrations of God's righteousness. Such demonstrations could also be understood as judgements in that God's keeping of his side of the relationship indicated that Israel was remaining faithful to its side, while its enemies presumably were not behaving appropriately in the eyes of God. That God had some such jurisdiction over the rest of the world was taken for granted, as is clear from such stories as those of the Flood, the Tower of Babel and the Destruction of Sodom, although the actual relationship and the behaviour that might be considered appropriate to it are not described or discussed.

For Israel, a central role was played by the law in the understanding of itself

in relation to God, so that the understanding of God's righteousness was also necessarily linked with the law.

That God posits law, and that he is bound to it as a just God, is a fundamental tenet in the OT knowledge of faith in all its variations. The element of unity in the faith of all the righteous in Israel . . . is the acknowledgement of God's law ordering all life both great and small and forming a basis for hope God's action is a perfect whole which stands because all his ways are right. They are right as the dealings which are worthy of acknowledgement, which give to all men their existence, and which assure them in their existence. Yahweh's law is righteous because he is righteous.¹⁰

Thus, in **Ex 23:7**, in the context of lawgiving and instruction about the right exercising of justice, God is depicted as prohibiting the perversion of justice through the favouring of a particular group, the use of false charges or bribes, or the killing of the innocent, because he himself will not do so: 'for I will not acquit the wicked', or, in parallel with the expression in Rom 4, and therefore more suitably for our purposes, '*for I will not justify the ungodly*'.¹¹

It would be a mistake, however, to attempt to understand this declaration about God as an isolated, general truth. This passage is concerned with the conduct of a lawsuit, the determining of who is in the right and who is in the wrong in some particular circumstance or incident. The force of the statement would seem to be that God does not allow escape from the consequences of wrongdoing. That would not be appropriate to the relationship between God and Israel. So it would be equally inappropriate for a judge in a human court to turn a blind eye to the true facts of a case or to make special allowances which might be in his interest. This does not mean that the wrongdoer can never be reinstated, but merely that this must be done by means of the mechanisms provided. In accordance with the findings of the court, he can make due recompense to the wronged, or take the punishment due, and so resume his normal place within society. In accordance with the requirements of the Torah, he can make the necessary cultic sacrifices¹² and so resume his normal place within the covenant community. In other words, we take it that when God is depicted as saying, 'I will not justify the ungodly', what is meant is that he will not justify those within Israel who choose not to make use of the means of reconciliation available to them through the Torah.

The earliest writings of the book of Isaiah present a similar picture of a God who will not justify the ungodly, in this case with reference to the people of Israel as a whole.¹³ Faced with the collapse of the Northern Kingdom and a series of political disasters in the Southern Kingdom, Isaiah pointed out that it was not God who was failing to be righteous, but the people. The fact that God was not acting to preserve his people was not to be taken to mean that he was not keeping to his side of the agreed relationship. Rather, it was the people who had broken away and proved themselves ungodly:

Sons have I reared and brought up,
but they have rebelled against me.
The ox knows its owner,
and the ass its master's crib;
but Israel does not know,
my people does not understand.
Ah, sinful nation,
a people laden with iniquity,
offspring of evildoers,
sons who deal corruptly!
They have forsaken the Lord,
they have despised the Holy One of Israel,
they are utterly estranged. (Is 1:2b-4)

In such circumstances, the behaviour appropriate for God, in order for him to remain righteous, was to punish Israel. But, it would appear, the nation was not willing to acknowledge its guilt. Like the ungodly of Ex 23:7, they sought, by means of the cult, to avoid the consequences of their wrongdoing. By offering sacrifices and prayers they thought they could bribe the judge and so go unpunished, and continue in their wrongdoing with no thought of making recompense. But the God who will not justify the ungodly rejects such attempts to bribe him, and demands that the wronged be treated as is their due. This is the picture of God which Isaiah presents in 1:11-17.

Despite the demand for change which concludes this passage, it would appear that Isaiah was convinced that no such cleansing would take place. The description of his call to prophecy (Is 6) suggests that he saw his role as one of confirming the people in their wickedness so that the judgement against them would be

conclusive and their punishment would be total destruction. The wrongs to which Israel points, for example in ch.5, include political, social, cultic and moral aberrations, so that every aspect of the law spelling out what is appropriate to Israel's relationship to God is shown to be being violated. Therefore, in not coming to their aid but sending destruction, God was behaving in accordance with the demands of the relationship as it stood, and, in so doing, was righteous:

Man is bowed down, and men are brought low,
and the eyes of the haughty are humbled.
But the Lord of hosts is exalted in justice,
and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness. (Is 5:15f)

During the exile, a new idea of God developed as the prophets reflected on what was happening to Israel. The fact that the nation had been severely defeated, but not actually destroyed, though it deserved to be, was interpreted as a basis for hope. God's righteous punishment was a startling reminder of how the relationship could and should be, and as such was a dramatic and yet gracious call for it to be re-established. The hope was qualified, however, by the recognition that even this message would fall on deaf ears in some instances. So it was suggested that God would differentiate in his treatment of the nation between those who responded to his call and those who did not. This was a significant change from the earlier collective understanding of righteousness. Is 1:27f is a passage which reflects this qualified hope:

Zion shall be redeemed by justice,
and those in her who repent, by righteousness.
But rebels and sinners shall be destroyed together,
and those who forsake the Lord shall be consumed.

The move away from an exclusively collective understanding is particularly clear in Ezekiel 18:

But if this man begets a son who sees all the sins which his father has done, and fears, and does not do likewise, . . . he shall not die for his father's iniquity; he shall surely live. (Ezek 18:14-17)

The latter part of this chapter goes even further in that it stresses that a wicked man who changes his ways and turns to righteousness shall be justified, he shall live, while one who turns away from righteousness shall die. That this represents a radically new understanding of God is shown by the rhetorical question, 'Is my way not just?' (Ezek 18:25, also 18:29). To the mind of the Israelites this approach would have appeared as a contradiction of the idea that God does not justify the ungodly. It asserts that God is a God who does justify the ungodly, provided that they turn back to a life appropriate to the covenant relationship, as spelled out in Ezek 18:5-9.

Deutero-Isaiah goes even further in refining and modifying the picture of the righteous God who justifies the ungodly. His starting point is the same, however. The defeat and exile of Israel were God's righteous punishment of a nation that had not maintained its side of relationship with him, despite warning.¹⁴ Their continuing plight was attributable to their failure to acknowledge this. Instead, it would seem, they had come to the conclusion that Yahweh had been defeated and could no longer be depended upon, no longer cared for them, and was not worthy of their attention. So they had turned to other gods and to idols, had given up their cultic practices and forgotten Yahweh. Westermann describes the situation well in pointing out that parts of Deutero-Isaiah are in the form of a trial:

The trial speeches against Israel are chiefly concerned with her past sins. They reveal Deutero-Isaiah as following the tradition of the pre-exilic prophets of doom, affirming and reiterating the message which they also declared. His hearers were still unable to realise that the origin of the doom which had overtaken God's chosen people lay in God himself. They were bringing charges against him (hence the form of the trial speech) accusing him of having cast his people off (43:28; 42:24a,25; 50:1), one of their arguments being that for many years they had loyally served him with their sacrifices (43:22ff). In answer to this, Deutero-Isaiah said that there was no other way in which God could have acted (43:28); for Israel sinned against him (43:24b,27; 50:1b) and the sacrifices she offered to him had not really given her national life its direction, and in consequence had never been accepted (43:23f). The charges which she was still bringing against him even today were therefore baseless.¹⁵

We have already seen¹⁶ how the prophet used the idea of God as Creator to restore the people's confidence in Yahweh, and to show them that he alone was the source of salvation for them, since an act of salvation, like all acts in history, is ultimately nothing other than an act of creation. We have also noted the remarkable way in which Deutero-Isaiah declares that this salvation is already present, immediately available for the people to appropriate. Yahweh has finished his judgement upon them and forgiven them. Salvation can be spoken of as already having taken place.¹⁷ We have seen how this can be regarded as an act of creation out of nothing. We now suggest that this can equally be regarded as an act of *justification of the ungodly*.

That the Israel to whom Deutero-Isaiah addressed himself was ungodly can hardly be disputed. Isaiah had already shown that the people were estranged from their God, as evidenced by their behaviour which clearly was contrary to that appropriate to the relationship they claimed to have with Yahweh. Deutero-Isaiah indicated that the claim to relationship had become hollow or even been largely abandoned. There is no sense in which the people could have regarded themselves as maintaining the sort of loyalty and dependence on Yahweh that Deut 6:13ff described as righteousness.

The salvation which Deutero-Isaiah proclaims takes a variety of forms throughout the writing. In 43:1 the Lord is depicted as saying,

Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.

The relationship which had been violated has been restored. Israel is his servant, he is their God. Future generations will say, 'I am the Lord's'.¹⁸ These announcements that God and Israel know and belong to each other amount to a declaration that all is as it should be between them. It is as if God has made a cultic judgement on Israel and pronounced the verdict, 'You are righteous'. All Israel need do to enjoy the benefits of this is to believe that it is so. So the nation is told to 'fear not'¹⁹ and return to the Lord.²⁰

That this proclamation clearly contravenes the understanding in Deut 6:20-25

of what Israel must be and do in order to be reckoned to be in right relationship with God demands that the promised salvation also be expressed in terms which explain how this can be so. It is possible because God has forgiven Israel, forgetting all their wrong-doing²¹. As Westermann puts it,

The trial speeches which the prophet addressed to his fellow-countrymen were not designed to move Israel to repentance, now that she saw the true state of things, and to make her beg God for mercy; no, with a certitude which admitted of no doubt Deutero-Isaiah now tells them that the situation has been completely transformed. God has forgiven his people (43:25). And now he looks for one thing and one only from men who could not understand him, and who accused him—their acceptance of the change to salvation which accompanied forgiveness, and their joyous affirmation of the opening words of the prologue, 'cry to her, that her iniquity is pardoned'.²²

This, and all his acts of salvation, he does *for his own sake*, because of his love for Israel which he is unwilling to relinquish despite the dictates of justice, and because the destruction of Israel would work against his purpose that all men might know and give glory to him.²³ This action can be regarded as a case in which God as judge turns a blind eye to wrongdoing because he stands to gain from so doing. Thus, viewed from a legal framework, Deutero-Isaiah's proclamation of salvation speaks of God acting in direct contradiction to the declaration of Ex 23:7b that he will not justify the ungodly.

The proclamation of salvation in Deutero-Isaiah also takes a form which speaks directly to Israel's most pressing concern, namely its plight as a defeated and exiled nation. The message is that her warfare is ended, that help is on the way, albeit from an unexpected quarter, that God will strengthen Israel, confound her enemies and bring her victory.²⁴ As we have noted, protection and victory in the field of international politics were, in the past, taken as proof both of God's righteousness and Israel's. So it would appear that the relationship between God and Israel is once more to be as it was intended to be. In assuming again the role of preserver of Israel, God is not only to put Israel's past behind him and turn the tide of history, but also, it would seem, to re-create a nation faithful to him, since the forms of behaviour which might be called righteousness in the partners to a relationship are inter-dependent. Thus, from the point of view of Israel's

status in relation to other nations, we can again say that, in bringing salvation, God justifies the ungodly.

The same could be said of the other major themes of Deutero-Isaiah's proclamation of salvation. The transformation of the natural world and the flowering of the wilderness²⁵ make the way ahead easy for Israel and guarantee provision of physical necessities. Thus it is again proclaimed that God is to resume his role as preserver of the nation, suggesting that all is to be as it was intended. Likewise the promise of innumerable offspring²⁶ is a declaration that God will preserve the nation.

These various aspects of the salvation which Deutero-Isaiah proclaims indicate not merely survival, but a level of prosperity and order and well-being that is summed up in the word *shālôm*, that gift from God which was longed for as the essence of life in the promised land. As we noted in our previous chapter, it was assumed that such a state of peace could exist only if Israel were righteous. In relation to this, Is 48:17-19 is of particular interest:

Thus says the Lord,
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
"I am the Lord your God,
who teaches you to profit,
who leads you in the way you should go.
O that you had hearkened to my commandments!
Then your peace would have been like the river,
and your righteousness like the waves of the sea;
your offspring would have been like the sand,
and your descendants like its grains;
their name would never be cut off
or destroyed from before me."

Here 'peace' and 'righteousness' occur in parallel in a way that suggests that the two ideas are, in effect, synonymous.²⁷ Other references to righteousness occur in the context of God bringing salvation and the well-being and prosperity that that implies.²⁸ Is 45:8 declares that *righteousness is created* by the Lord:

"Shower, O heavens, from above,

and let the skies rain down righteousness;
let the earth open, that salvation may sprout forth,
and let it cause righteousness to spring up also;
I the Lord have created it."

Thus we conclude that, while he does not say so in so many words, Deutero-Isaiah throughout his prophecy declares that Yahweh is a God who justifies the ungodly. *Contrary to any reasonable expectation, he declares that he will create, or has created, out of unrighteous Israel, a nation in right relationship with him.*

This is not to say that the prophet no longer held to the conviction that God is righteous. Rather, he affirms this by broadening the context. *The righteousness that is defined by the covenant relationship is secondary or subordinate to the righteousness that is defined by the relationship of God as Creator of his chosen people and, above all, of the world. As such he claims the right to be glorified above all others.* This is the purpose of his present course of action.

"For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it,
for how should my name be profaned?
My glory I will not give to another." (Is 48:11)

When the Israelites see what an incredible reversal of their situation God can bring about, they will give glory to him.²⁹ At the same time, this action will put Israel in a position of glory in the eyes of the other nations, so that through them God's glory is revealed to all men.³⁰ In fact Deutero-Isaiah goes as far as to depict the natural world giving glory to God.³¹ In justifying the ungodly, God behaves in a manner appropriate to his relationship to the world as its Creator, within the context of the current situation, for appropriate behaviour, or righteousness, for the Creator, is to exercise his power in such a way as to enable the world to give him the glory that is his right. Correspondingly we could say that righteousness for the world consists in giving glory to God. The creative action of God that brings this about constitutes the salvation of the world.

From this we infer that Deutero-Isaiah believed that God's purpose in creating Israel was to bring about the salvation of the world, by leading the world to

glorify God. When, because of their unfaithfulness, they ceased to be the great nation they could have been, they in fact witnessed against God. The only way God could save face in front of the other nations was to justify his ungodly people, thereby vindicating himself. In conclusion, the study of the God who justifies the ungodly, as the concept occurs in the Old Testament, has been shown to be fundamentally related to the notion of God as him who creates out of nothing. His acts of salvation which create and re-create are acts of justification of the ungodly, which simultaneously indicate God's claims on mankind, in terms very much reminiscent of Rom 1:18ff. We contend, therefore, that the Old Testament faith does not appear to be radically different from the faith Paul preached, and especially that the feature of Paul's theology which Käsemann emphasizes is very firmly rooted in Judaism.

3.1.2 The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

When we turn to the intertestamental writings we find virtually no trace of the idea of God being him who justifies the ungodly. The predominant theme is that the ungodly will be destroyed and only the righteous saved. There is a clear distinction between those who turn their back on God and disobey his law, and those who are loyal and obedient, the contrast sometimes being between Israel and the rest of the nations, sometimes between these categories within Israel itself.

Some writers do, however, allow for some middle ground. These speak of the possibility of repentance, calling on sinners to turn back to God and trust in his mercy.³² Tobit, in his prayer of joy (13:1-18), speaks of God chastising and showing mercy, and so exhorts those so chastised to adopt a positive attitude to God:

When ye turn unto him out of all the nations
Whithersoever ye shall be scattered,
With your whole heart and with your whole soul, to do
truth before him,
Then he will turn unto you, and will no longer hide his
face from you.

And now see what he hath wrought with you,
And give him thanks with your whole mouth,
And bless the Lord of righteousness,
And exalt the everlasting King.

I, in the land of my captivity, give him thanks,
And show his strength and majesty unto nations of sinners.
Turn, ye sinners, and do righteousness before him.
Who can tell if he will accept you, and have mercy on you?
(Tobit 13:6)

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs also argue that God sends punishment in order to bring people to repentance. In the cases of Reuben and Simeon, the nature of the punishment is seen to be directly related to their particular sin in such a way as to prevent them from continuing in it, as well as bringing them to repentance (T. Reub 1:6-10; T. Sim 2:5-14).³³ While this is not justification of the ungodly as such, it does suggest it was divine action which brought about the repentance which led to forgiveness. Levi also suggests that it was God who made it possible for him to be righteous (T. Lev 2:3ff). The idea of forgiveness preceding repentance in order to open the way to reconciliation occurs as a recommendation for conduct in human relationships (T. Gad 6:3-7) but it is not actually stated that this is the way God proceeds. Rather, the general tenor of the whole work is that God will be merciful to those who repent and persevere in righteousness, despite the falling away of the majority of Israel and persecution. This is the only course of life which provides hope of salvation (T. Jud 23:5).

In the Testaments, God can be looked on to be merciful through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (T. Lev 15:4). It is because of them that the race will be preserved, despite a time of almost total apostasy. In 1 Baruch mercy is sought because it is seen to be in God's interest. So few have remained loyal to him that unless he is merciful to the repentant his glory will not be shown forth. It is not because of any claim that can be made on the basis of their past conduct, that the people can look to him to save them as in former times, but because of their belief that it is only through them that his power and name can be known and acknowledged (1 Baruch 2:13-3:7). Thus again, while not actually holding to the concept of God as him who justifies the ungodly, 1 Baruch, and in a similar way, The Prayer of Manasses and 4 Ezra, look to God for mercy whilst acknowledging

that the repentant have no claim of their own merit to present, but only their unworthiness.

The Wisdom of Solomon also approaches the idea of God justifying the ungodly without ever quite reaching the sort of radical statements of Gen 15:6 or Deutero-Isaiah. Because of his love for the world, which he otherwise would not have created, God punishes sinners in order to make them aware of their sin, and by this means gives them repentance. Because of his power he is able to show mercy (Wisdom of Solomon 11:21-12:2).³⁴ In addition, he gives the gift of his wisdom to those who seek it in order to counteract human weakness (6:12ff). Thus those who respond to his admonition and come to know and give allegiance to him receive not only mercy but the possibility of being righteous:

But thou, our God, art gracious and true,
Longsuffering, and in mercy ordering all things.
For even if we sin, we are thine, knowing thy domination;
But we shall not sin, knowing that we are accounted thine:
For to know thee is perfect righteousness,
Yea, to know thy dominion is the root of immortality.
(Wisdom of Solomon 15:1-3)

Likewise the Book of Jubilees, while requiring man to make the first step of repenting, affirms that if a man does turn fully to God, God will cleanse him, make him obedient, and protect him from turning away again (Jub 1:15-23; 23:27-30; 25:15).

In summary, then, we could say that in the intertestamental writings the idea of God justifying the ungodly does not occur as such. Nevertheless, there is the belief that, through punishment, God does provide the opportunity for those who have turned away from him to turn back. Those who respond to his call to return to righteous conduct will be received with mercy and sustained in a life of righteousness. Those who do not respond will be destroyed. Since the way of righteousness is one of obedience to the law, it would seem that this already limited justifying of the ungodly is only for the people of Israel, who have access to the law. The destruction of the Gentiles is, in most cases, assumed and anticipated with joy.

3.1.3 The Qumran Writings

In the writings of the Qumran community, as in the intertestamental writings, much emphasis is laid on the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, and their respective fates on some not too distant future day of reckoning. The righteous, according to this sect, were members of the community, or, more precisely, those members of the community who did not deviate from keeping the commandments of the law, as interpreted by the community leader. Any members found to be unfaithful to the law would be expelled, while any whose unfaithfulness remained undetected would be condemned by God at the end.³⁵ Only this small remnant of strictly law-abiding Israelites could expect to be spared destruction on the day when God would act decisively to eliminate all ungodliness and establish his righteousness on earth.

Despite this uncompromising view of who constituted the righteous, the understanding of how one came to be, and remain, a member of this group, is firmly based on a belief that *God justifies the ungodly*, or some of them at least. This is particularly clear in some of the Hymns (1QH) and in the psalm at the conclusion of the Community Rule (1QS). The image of man being made of clay or dust is used to emphasize his worthlessness, sinfulness and ignorance, in total contrast to the glory, righteousness and all-knowingness of God.³⁶ Man is nothing before God and can do nothing of himself. In particular, no man is just in God's judgment. Any righteousness or righteous deeds exhibited in a man are the work of God³⁷ who determines the course of a man's life by granting him at any one time either the spirit of falsehood or the spirit of truth (1QS 4:15f). This view is summed up in the following passage from the psalm from the Community Rule:

As for me,
I belong to wicked mankind,
to the company of ungodly flesh.
My iniquities, rebellions, and sins,
together with the perversity of my heart,
belong to the company of worms
and to those who walk in darkness.
For mankind has no way,
and man is unable to establish his steps
since justification is with God

and perfection of way is out of his hand.
All things come to pass by his knowledge;
He establishes all things by his design
and without him nothing is done. (1QS 11:9-11)

In addition to this acknowledgement that every individual is ungodly, it is asserted that, despite claims to the contrary, no nation is able to call itself righteous:

Do not all the people loathe iniquity? And yet it is spread by them all.
Does not the fame of truth issue from the mouth of all the nations?
Yet is there a lip or tongue which holds to it? Which nation likes to
be oppressed by another stronger than itself, or likes its wealth to be
wickedly seized? And yet which nation has not oppressed another,
and where is there a people which has not seized another's wealth?
(1Q27 1:9-12)

The righteous, then, are those whom God selects, or had selected from the beginning of time, out of the mass of ungodly mankind. He gives them the spirit of truth which means they have knowledge of him. They know of his righteousness, power, glory and grace. They know his covenant. These are proclaimed by those to whom they have been revealed and those who are his elect respond to the teaching, and, knowing and understanding the works of God, are able to choose what is pleasing to him and reject what is not.³⁸ The first step on this path is a cleansing from past sin, symbolised by a cleansing ritual, after which the way of God was to be followed without deviation (1QS 3:7ff). This is acknowledged as a remarkable act on God's part:

Thou hast cleansed a perverse spirit of great sin
that it may stand with the host of the Holy Ones.
(1QH 3:21f)

Such was the confidence of the community member of God's act of undeserved justification, he was sure he could face God and the world in complete assurance that he had nothing to fear or hide:

I will declare his judgement concerning my sins,
and my transgressions shall be before my eyes
as an engraved Precept.
I will say to my God, 'My Righteousness'
and 'Author of my Goodness' to the Most High,
'Fountain of Knowledge' and 'Source of Holiness'
, 'Summit of Glory' and 'Almighty Eternal Majesty'.
I will choose that which he teaches me
and will delight in his judgement of me. (1QS 10:11-13)

This confidence, however, is not simply based on a single, initial, once for all cleansing. Rather, it is a confidence that, since God has chosen him in this way, he will enable the member to be as he should be, strengthening, supporting and directing him in the way of righteousness:

As for me,
my justification is with God.
In his hand are the perfection of my way
and the uprightness of my heart.
He will wipe out my transgression
through his righteousness.
For my light has sprung
from the source of his knowledge;
my eyes have beheld his marvellous deeds,
and the light of my heart, the mystery to come.
He that is everlasting
is the support of my right hand;
the way of my steps is over stout rock
which nothing can shake;
for the rock of my steps is the truth of God
and his might is the support of my right hand. (1QS 11:2-5)

It is this support which makes it possible to remain faithful despite extensive scorn, persecution and torture, as a number of the Hymns indicate.³⁹ It is also a confidence that God will continue to forgive those he has chosen to be his righteous people should they have difficulty in maintaining the standards of the law:

As for me,

if I stumble, the mercies of God
 shall be my eternal salvation.
 If I stagger because of the sin of the flesh,
 my justification shall be
 by the righteousness of God which endures for ever.
 When my distress is unleashed
 he will deliver my soul from the Pit
 and will direct my steps to the way.
 He will draw me near by his grace,
 and by his mercy will he bring my justification.
 He will judge me in the righteousness of his truth
 and in the greatness of his goodness
 he will pardon all my sins.
 Through his righteousness he will cleanse me
 of the uncleanness of man
 and of the sins of the children of men,
 that I may confess to God his righteousness,
 and his majesty to the Most High. (1QS 11:12-15)⁴⁰

Two additional points confirm our view that the Qumran community held to a concept of God as him who justifies the ungodly. The first is the belief that it is not for the righteous to take judgement into their own hands. Judgement and the rendering of punishment or reward is for God alone. It is the role of the righteous to 'proclaim the goodness of God and the sin of men until their transgression ends' (1QS 10:23f). Man cannot tell whom, from amongst the ungodly, God has chosen, and so the righteous must constantly make available the opportunity for transgressors to be set free from their sin, by passing on the marvellous knowledge of who God is that they have been so fortunate to receive (1QH 1:28ff; 18:10ff).

The second point of confirmation is the frequently repeated amazement that God does behave in this way toward man. Although it is acknowledged that justification is 'from the source of his righteousness' (1QS 11:5), that it is in order to claim the recognition, praise and glory that is his due as Creator and controller of all that is and all that is done that God chooses men in this way⁴¹, the hymn writer still asserts that it is beyond human comprehension that he should enlighten and use insignificant and unworthy men for his purpose. This view is summed up at the conclusion of the Community Rule hymn:

Who can endure thy glory,

and what is the son of man
 in the midst of thy wonderful deeds?
 What shall one born of woman
 be accounted before thee?
 Kneaded from the dust,
 his abode is the nourishment of worms.
 He is but a shape, but moulded clay,
 and inclines towards the dust.
 What shall hand-moulded clay reply?
 What counsel shall it understand? (1QS 11:20-22)⁴²

As we argued in the previous chapter, the imagery of community members being transformed from clay and dust by receiving the knowledge of God and his righteousness can be taken as an affirmation that God creates out of nothing. Here we see this notion goes hand in hand with the idea that God justifies the ungodly *by the same action* of imparting his knowledge. The numerous instances of these notions occurring in parallel, or as 'mixed metaphors', demonstrates beyond doubt that for the hymn writer(s) creation and justification coincided as equivalent declarations of the one act of salvation.

3.1.4 Rabbinic Literature

We turn now to the rabbinic literature. The quantity and nature of this material precludes any detailed examination of its content. In particular, the fact that these writings comprise a compilation of a wide range of often contradictory views, rather than any sort of systematic theology, prevents us from making any generalizations about what the rabbis thought. We shall, therefore, simply endeavour to note the existence of certain ideas that seem to us to be of relevance to our study of the concept of God as him who justifies the ungodly. In doing this, we do not claim to be comprehensive either in the treatment of any one idea, or in covering the range of ideas related to justification or righteousness. We acknowledge, also, our dependence on secondary literature for locating these ideas.

In the first instance, we should note that the treatment of Abraham in this literature does not seem to demonstrate a belief in a God who justifies the ungodly.

Strack and Billerbeck⁴³ point out that there were rabbis who considered that Abraham was greatly honoured by God and men because of his righteous behaviour. The view was held that he was always righteous, keeping the whole law before it was given⁴⁴, so that it could be said, "even while young he stored up pious acts and good deeds . . . no breasts suckled him in piety or good deeds".⁴⁵ In apparent contrast to this view, however, is the following passage:

. . . Abraham was afraid and said to himself, 'Perhaps I bear guilt for having worshipped idols all these years.' God reassured him: 'Thine is the dew of thy youth': even as dew evaporates, so have thy sins evaporated. . .'⁴⁶

More importantly, there is a passage in the Mekilta which suggests that, in the eyes of God at least, Abraham had his high status not from keeping the whole Torah, but from keeping one particular commandment in one specific situation:

R. Nehemiah says: Whence can you prove that whosoever accepts even one single commandment with true faith is deserving of having the Holy Spirit rest upon him? We find this to have been the case with our fathers. For as a reward for the faith with which they believed, they were considered worthy of having the Holy Spirit rest upon them, so that they could utter the song, as it is said: 'And they believed in the Lord . . . Then sang Moses and the children of Israel.' And so also you find that our father Abraham inherited both this world and the world beyond only as a reward for the faith with which he believed, as it is said: 'And he believed in the Lord,' etc. (Gen 15:6). And so also you find that Israel was redeemed from Egypt only as a reward for the faith with which they believed, as it is said, 'And the people believed' (Ex 4:31). And thus it says: 'The Lord preserveth the faithful' (Ps 31:24)—He keeps in remembrance the faith of the fathers.⁴⁷

It is beyond the scope of our present study to explore what was understood to be the meaning and significance of 'having the Holy Spirit rest upon' someone, but it seems likely that it indicated the sort of acceptance by God which we might call justification. This interpretation is supported by the comparisons made in the passage since, as we have seen, God's action in reckoning Abraham righteous, and in preserving and redeeming Israel, can be described as justification.

In view of the emphasis on faith in the above passage, it would seem that this rabbinic interpretation has much in common with our interpretation of Gen 15:6.⁴⁸ Faced with almost certain destruction, the most appropriate behaviour for the people of Israel was to believe that their God would preserve them, even though the odds against such a possibility seemed insurmountable. The fact that he did then rescue them is confirmation that God did indeed reckon their faith as righteousness. The main difference between the view of the rabbi and the Old Testament view as we saw it, is that the rabbi regards these as acts of obedience to a commandment, rather than simply as acts of trust without any structure of commandments.

The two seemingly contradictory views of Abraham that we have noted reflect a tension which is a significant part of the rabbinic literature on the subject of whom God would consider to be righteous, and is perhaps summed up in this argument relating to Abraham's petitioning God on behalf of Sodom:

‘Shalt not the judge of all the earth do justly?’ If thou desirest the world to endure, there can be no absolute justice, while if thou desirest absolute justice the world cannot endure, yet thou wouldst hold the cord by both ends, desiring both the world and absolute justice. Unless thou forgoest a little, the world cannot endure.⁴⁹

Strict justice demanded that each Israelite should obey the whole law. The fact that Abraham was held up as exemplary, however, indicates that the majority of the people did not attain this high standard. Though this was something for which to strive, there were means, other than perfect obedience to every commandment, by which an Israelite might be considered still to be party to the covenant with God, i.e., reckoned righteous, without God being regarded as acting unjustly in allowing that.

The view has been widely held, that a major approach in rabbinic Judaism was a doctrine of merits. This concept is complex and can take a variety of forms, but a simplified outline should be sufficient for our purposes.⁵⁰ The basic idea seems to have been that a balance sheet of a person's failures and successes with regard to law-keeping was the basis for judgement whether he was to be declared guilty or innocent, condemned or justified. It was sufficient simply to

have more acts of obedience to one's credit than transgressions in order to be declared righteous. Where there was a balance, one could appeal to the mercy of God on the strength of the greater righteousness of one's ancestors, or the patriarchs, or one's contemporaries, in order for the balance to be tipped in one's favour.

Against this understanding is the extensive and well illustrated argument presented by Sanders.⁵¹ In his view, this concept has been over-emphasized and seriously misinterpreted. Properly understood, the passages which give rise to the above-mentioned understanding, are designed to encourage obedience and discourage disobedience: one should behave *as if* a ledger were being kept. It was a reminder that God is a just judge who is not capricious or arbitrary in punishing transgressions and rewarding good works. Most importantly, Sanders argues that the concept is not concerned with determining who is righteous, but with how the righteous will be treated, in particular in the world to come. If this is the case, the doctrine is not really relevant to our assessment of rabbinic attitudes to the idea of God justifying the ungodly. Certainly other scholars have noted the relative insignificance of the concept, and drawn attention to the much more important emphasis on the mercy of God.⁵²

The tension between strict justice and mercy is kept in balance when it is understood that God's mercy is not arbitrary, but is available to those who seek it. To ask for mercy is to ask to be reckoned righteous. It indicates a desire, following some kind of turning away, to return to being party to the covenant, with the basic intention to behave in a manner appropriate to that covenant, even though in practice this has not always happened in the past, and in reality is not expected always to happen in the future. That this was a common understanding is indicated by the petition for forgiveness which, as part of the Tephillah, was said three times a day:

Pardon us, our Father, for we have sinned against thee. Wipe out and remove our transgressions from before thine eyes, for great are thy mercies. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who aboundest in forgiving.⁵³

The considerable confidence the rabbis had in God's merciful forgiveness can

be illustrated in two ways. Firstly, there was the belief that, for every act of disobedience, there was some specified means of indicating one's desire for mercy. As Sanders puts it,

The universally held view is this: God has appointed means of atonement for every transgression, except the intention to reject God and his covenant. That is, those who are in the covenant will remain in and will receive the covenantal promises (including a share in the world to come), unless they remove themselves by 'casting off the yoke'. No matter how numerous a man's transgressions, God has provided for their forgiveness, as long as he indicates his intention to remain in the covenant by repenting and doing other appropriate acts of atonement.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that there may be those who would attempt to abuse such a system. For such there is the warning, "If a man said, 'I will sin and repent, and sin again and repent', he will be given no chance to repent."⁵⁵

The second illustration of the rabbinic confidence in God's forgiveness, already mentioned in the above quotation from Sanders, is that God will forgive any number of transgressions, in response to repentance. It is a person's basic position at the time the reckoning is made that determines whether or not God will reckon him righteous.

R. Simeon b. Yohai said: Even if he is perfectly righteous all his life but rebels at the end, he destroys his former good deeds, for it is said, 'The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression.' And even if one is completely wicked all his life but repents at the end, he is not reproached with his wickedness, for it is said, 'and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness.'⁵⁶

At the same time, this passage represents a clear rejection of any idea of God as him who justifies the ungodly. Although the theories of atonement and repentance affirm God's gracious mercy, it would seem that, generally speaking, it is assumed to be up to man to take the initiative if broken relationships are to be restored.

There is, nevertheless, some evidence that not all rabbis took exactly this view. In *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana* it is stated that God "enhances the strength of the righteous who do his will" and "leads sinners to resolve upon repentance"⁵⁷, thus indicating a belief that God may initiate the process which results in a man being reckoned righteous. This statement leads on to a further discussion which confirms our interpretation that such divine initiative was not simply assumed whenever the fate of a sinner was considered:

'Good and upright is the Lord, because he doth instruct sinners in the way' (Ps 25:8). When Wisdom is asked, "The sinner—what is to be his punishment?" Wisdom answers: 'Evil which pursueth sinners' (Prov 13:21). When Prophecy is asked, "The sinner—what is to be his punishment?" Prophecy replies: 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die' (Ezek 18:4). When Torah is asked, "The sinner—what is to be his punishment?" Torah replies: Let him bring a guilt offering in expiation and his sin shall be forgiven him. When the Holy One is asked, "The sinner—what is to be his punishment?" the Holy One replies: In penitence let him mend his ways, and his sins shall be forgiven him. Hence it is written, 'At one and the same time kind and strict in judgement is the Lord' (Ps 25:8). R. Phinehas commented: How can he who is strict in judgement be called kind? And how can he who is kind be called strict in judgement? 'Because he doth instruct sinners in the way' (*ibid.*)—that is, he teaches sinners the way to act in penitence. Therefore Hosea, admonishing Israel, said to them: 'Return, O Israel' (Hos 14:2).⁵⁸

As we concluded in our discussion of the Apocrypha, such an understanding cannot be regarded as a belief in God as him who justifies the ungodly, but it does represent some movement in that direction.

A passage which quite clearly admits of the possibility of God justifying the ungodly in the sort of way we found in Deutero-Isaiah, is one in which it is debated whether or not repentance is essential for the redemption of Israel. The winning view seems to be the one that declares that God will exercise his power to achieve his purposes even without the contribution to the relationship required by the covenant:

R. Eliezer said: If Israel repent, they will be redeemed; if not, they will not be redeemed. R. Joshua said to him, If they do not repent,

will they not be redeemed! But the Holy One, blessed be he, will set up a king over them, whose decrees shall be as cruel as Haman's, whereby Israel shall engage in repentance, and he will thus bring them back to the right path. Another Baraitha taught: R. Eliezer said: If Israel repent, they will be redeemed, as it is written, 'Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.' R. Joshua said to him, But is it not written, 'ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money?' 'Ye have sold yourselves for nought,' for idolatry; 'and ye shall be redeemed without money' - without repentance and good deeds. R. Eliezer retorted to R. Joshua, But is it not written, 'Return unto me, and I will return unto you'? R. Joshua rejoined, But is it not written, 'For I am master over you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you unto Zion'? R. Eliezer replied, But it is written, 'In returning and rest shall ye be saved.' R. Joshua replied, But is it not written, 'Thus saith the Lord, The Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nations abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship'? R. Eliezer countered, But is it not written, 'If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me'? R. Joshua answered, But it is elsewhere written, 'And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.' At this R. Eliezer remained silent.⁵⁹

Clearly this passage is not as radical as Deutero-Isaiah, in that here it is acknowledged only that such a thing as justification of the ungodly could occur, in contrast to the prophet's confident assertion that it had occurred already. However, the idea that such an event would be experienced as entirely undeserved and unexpected divine action is certainly conveyed.

3.1.5 Conclusion

We have attempted in this section to survey the sorts of ideas about God justifying men that *may*⁶⁰ have been available to Paul. While different parts of literature have their own particular emphases, and in some respects vary enormously, it is perhaps possible to claim that something of a general picture has

emerged. The *usual* situation within Israel is that *God will not justify those who turn their back on him* by disobeying the law. Nevertheless, he provides means by which a transgressor, or Israel as a whole, can return to a normal place within the relationship and therefore be reckoned righteous. He may even take initiative in making it possible for a man to remain righteous, or to repent and so be declared righteous. But the basic position is that it is adherence to the law which distinguishes those who will be justified from those who will not. Thus it can, in general, be asserted that God will not justify the ungodly.

There is a recognition in some cases, however, that this general rule applies only within a particular framework. When circumstances are such that to retain this position would be to prevent God's purposes from being worked out, then it is abandoned.⁶¹ *When the strict requirements of the law-based covenant stand in the way of God achieving what he desires for Israel, for the creation, for himself, then, with totally unexpected and astonishing power he justifies the ungodly.* It is perhaps worth noting that, in all the instances of this happening that we have seen, one of the consequences was the establishment or re-establishment of a law-based system, and hence of the more general principle that God does not justify the ungodly.

3.2 The God who Justifies the Ungodly as a Unifying Theme in Romans

With this background material in mind we now proceed to our study of the role in Romans of the concept of God as 'him who justifies the ungodly'. As before, we propose to work through the epistle from the beginning, outlining the argument and highlighting the points where the concept of God as justifier of the ungodly is present, relevant, or consistent with the text. It is our intention, where possible, to avoid repetition of the previous chapter. In particular, our opinion that the epistle is written to a community consisting of Jewish and Gentile believers in conflict, will be assumed in this chapter, and some later parts of the epistle will be dealt with much more briefly. It is, however, important to note that, if Käsemann's claim that "creation, resurrection, and justification declare in fact one and the same divine action"⁶² is correct, some repetition will be inevitable.

Such repetition, therefore, may be regarded as confirmation of this assertion.

1:1-15

In opening his letter, Paul speaks of several relationships, to which, presumably, belongs behaviour which may be regarded as righteous for the particular circumstances of those involved at the time of writing. Firstly, Jesus Christ is 'designated Son of God' (1:4). We have already argued that, according to this formula, the resurrection marks the point at which this designation took effect.⁶³

In light of what we have learned about cultic practice, we can postulate a parallel between priestly or divine cultic declarations and the designation of Jesus Christ as Son of God. From this point of view, the resurrection both confirms and effects a divine declaration that this father-son relationship exists. In this context it could be said that, at the resurrection, God reckons Jesus Christ to be righteous. As Son of God, Jesus Christ then has the specific task of exercising power to call and equip people to his service. It is this information, that constitutes the 'gospel of God'.

Secondly, there is a Lord-servant relationship between Jesus Christ and Paul, initiated by the call to Paul to be an apostle. In accepting the call, Paul behaves in a way that is appropriate to the relationship which is thereby established. That Paul 'received grace and apostleship' both establishes and confirms the relationship and thus constitutes a declaration that Paul is reckoned righteous within it. The establishment of this relationship can be seen as a particular instance of Jesus Christ carrying out his responsibility as Son of God. Paul, in turn, has the specific task 'to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations' (1:5). In the particular circumstances, he believes, he is to do this within the community in Rome. The fact that he takes a somewhat defensive position in 1:8ff suggests that he knew, or expected, that at least some of his readers would question the appropriateness of his proposed visits to Rome, or even his claim to be an apostle. So this statement can be seen to have a polemical intent.

Thirdly, the people to whom Paul writes are in relationship with Jesus Christ. He is their Lord; they are called to belong to him. As such, they are God's beloved, his holy people. The use of these titles suggests that Paul regarded those called by Jesus Christ as having the same status as God's elect in the Old Testament, namely, those whom God would declare to be righteous. The same can be said of the title 'servant' which Paul applies to himself. It is Paul's intention to 'bring about the obedience of faith' amongst them, presumably because he believed such obedience was the appropriate behaviour for those in this relationship with Jesus Christ. On their side, God, as father, and Jesus Christ, as Lord, give grace and peace to those who are called.

Thus we have, in these three relationships that Paul mentions, evidence of God having justified those concerned. At this stage, however, we have no indication as to whether or not those now justified had previously been classed as the 'ungodly'.

We have noted, in our study of the background material, that in Judaism the call of God that created or re-created a relationship was followed by the establishment or re-establishment of a law-based system which could be used to define righteous behaviour. In Rom 1:5, however, we have the suggestion that righteous behaviour is to be defined in relation to faith rather than to the law. If, in this letter to the Romans, Paul is already beginning to 'bring about the obedience of faith', we can expect further clarification of this concept as we work through the letter. We have also seen that God would, at times, break the rule of not justifying the ungodly, if he deemed it necessary to the fulfilling of his purposes. The occurrence in 1:5 of 'for the sake of his name among all the nations, although seemingly a reference to Jesus Christ rather than God, may also be an indication that something exceptional is being, or has been, done.⁶⁴

1:16f

That Paul says he is 'not ashamed of the gospel (1:16), is further indication that he is dealing with something exceptional. In our last chapter, we suggested that Paul was arguing that the gospel he preached was not an inferior version intended only for Gentiles.⁶⁵ This conjecture can now be taken further. It seems feasible

that this declaration of Paul's might have been a rejection of accusations that the gospel presented a picture of God as unjust. In Ezek^{18:25}, such an accusation brought the response, "Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?" If Paul does preach God as him who justifies the ungodly, then it may not be simply because of its roots in Judaism that Paul says the gospel is 'to the Jew first' (1:16). He may mean that the gospel is all the more relevant to those who do not acknowledge their need of it, than to those commonly reckoned to be ungodly.

Paul declares the gospel 'is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith' (1:16). In light of our study of earlier writings, we could say that salvation is what happens to those whom God declares righteous, those whom God reckons to be in right relationship with him. Or, perhaps more accurately, we could say that being in right relationship with God is synonymous with salvation. In Deutero-Isaiah it is announced that God has restored the relationship between himself and his people. If Israel believe this announcement, it is brought into effect, and the people enjoy the benefits promised to them.⁶⁶ In this sense, the announcement of salvation is, for those who believe it, the creative action of God which brings it about. In much the same way, Paul declares that the gospel concerning Jesus Christ is, to those who believe it, that power which brings about salvation. It could be said that it is the acceptance of, or faith in, the gospel, that makes the gospel true.

Paul states that this is the case for everyone, Jews and Gentiles, so, if the gospel is essentially an announcement that God justifies, it would at least have to *allow the possibility* that the ungodly were in a position to experience this salvation. We cannot at this point say that the essence of the gospel for Paul is that God is he who justifies the ungodly, but we *can* assert that such a notion has certainly not been precluded.

This concept of God can also be read into 1:17 in a way that helps to make sense of the text. Taking an understanding of righteousness as appropriate behaviour within particular circumstances, it is possible to say that the gospel reveals that, given the prevailing circumstances, the appropriate behaviour for God is to justify the ungodly. Those who believe this find it to be so. Those who do not believe

cannot see the righteousness of God because their response is inappropriate, and, accordingly, they are not reckoned righteous. In other words, the only appropriate, and hence effective response to the gospel, is faith. This is consistent with the response advocated in earlier writings presenting God as justifier of the ungodly. It is also in harmony with the view that the difficult phrase, ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, is Paul's way of saying that the revelation occurs only in the context of faith.⁶⁷

Paul's somewhat ambiguous quotation of Habakkuk 2:4b can also be seen to fit with a gospel that declares that God justifies the ungodly. If we take it that ἐκ πίστεως qualifies ζήσεται we can say that those ungodly whom God justifies will thereafter in some sense structure their lives in accordance with the faith that facilitated their justification. This would contrast with the situation in the Jewish writings we have discussed, where, as we have noted⁶⁸ those so justified were expected thereafter to structure their lives on the Torah. Understood this way, ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται can be regarded as being in parallel with ὑπακοή πίστεως in Rom 1:5. Presumably this means that the life so lived will be as God intended life to be.

Alternatively, ἐκ πίστεως can be taken to qualify ὁ δίκαιος. Those who are reckoned righteous because of their faith will be given that which is promised to the righteous, namely, life. This could be taken to mean that their lives will be of the sort of quality that was described in the Old Testament as *shālôm*. If this is the case, it would seem that this interpretation is not significantly different from that above. If the reference is eschatological, the understanding would be that those who had been reckoned righteous because of their faith would be saved from the anticipated apocalyptic destruction of the ungodly. Again, this interpretation does not really differ from the above, since it may be assumed that those whose lives are based on faith will continue to be considered righteous and so escape final destruction. However understood, the quotation seems to confirm the assertion that salvation, either present or future, or both, is granted, under the arrangement communicated by the gospel, to those who believe this gospel.

It is generally considered that in 1:16f Paul announces the theme of the epistle. In the discussion above we have anticipated Paul, attempting to spell out these

verses as they would be if the central theme of the gospel were that God is he who justifies the ungodly. The occurrence here of several terms related to this concept in the other writings we have examined seemed to invite this. We have suggested that the interrelation of righteousness, faith, life, salvation, and gospel, is consistent with the idea that the gospel declares God as he who justifies the ungodly. It remains to be seen whether or not Paul's own elaboration of the theme confirms this speculation.

1:18-32

In 1:18, Paul implies that the gospel is 'the power of God for salvation' because it reveals the wrath of God. This suggests that God's righteousness, or some aspect of it at least is revealed negatively. By pointing to God's righteous response to man's unrighteousness, the gospel indicates what is required of man for him to be reckoned righteous, thereby facilitating the possibility. As Käsemann put it, "The need for the righteousness of God comes to light simultaneously with its actualisation."⁶⁹

In order to see how the idea that God justifies the ungodly fits with this, we can paraphrase Paul's description of the situation using the terms that we have found to be important to this view of who God is.

1:18-32 does not tell us what God would have done if man had been righteous, but we can assume that Paul took it for granted that God is always righteous.⁷⁰ By telling us what were the punishable offences committed by men, Paul indicates what behaviour would have been reckoned to man as righteousness. As we showed in the preceding chapter⁷¹, the appropriate human behaviour towards God is to give him the recognition due to one who, as Creator, has adequately demonstrated his 'eternal power and deity' and, consequently, his right to Lordship.

Instead, man has not only failed to give the due acknowledgement to God, but has also actually accorded to himself, and to other created things, the status which, in fact, belongs to God alone. By doing this, man violates the relationship, thereby cutting himself off from God and proving himself ungodly. If God is to remain

righteous, he must respond in a new way, because the situation is now changed. It is this righteous response that man experiences as the wrath of God.⁷²

As Paul describes it, the particular thing that was most offensive on man's part was that he knew full well that God was who he was. He did not act out of ignorance, but deliberately chose to suppress and falsify what he knew of God. Accordingly, God, making the punishment fit the crime, denied man the ability to know what could be known of him, and, consequently, the opportunity to behave appropriately towards him. Because of his deliberate ungodliness, man is rendered incapable of being righteous. Instead, his behaviour is determined by his relationship with the gods he has chosen in preference to God⁷³. His immoral behaviour is, therefore, the consequence rather than the cause of his ungodliness, as we have already seen.⁷⁴

This aspect of the revelation of God's righteousness seems to be unique to the gospel. The Qumran community had a view close to Paul's, believing that the decisive factor between righteousness and ungodliness was knowledge of God. They correctly surmised that all men, of themselves, are ungodly, so that any credit for their being righteous is God's alone.⁷⁵ They differ from Paul, however, in that they imagine man is ungodly because he was created that way, rather than that their ungodliness is something he has chosen for himself. According to Paul, it was not that man was *created* helpless, but that his helplessness was due to an ignorance of God that was the punishment for his suppressing and falsifying the knowledge of God available to him.

This then raises a question about what being righteous within Judaism means from this frame of reference. We shall digress from discussing the argument in Romans in order to speculate what the logical consequences of this understanding of the wrath of God might be for our understanding of the relationship between God and Israel. Taking Paul's description of mankind, and resorting again to a temporal description, we could say that, before election the people of Israel, along with everyone else had been rendered incapable of knowing what could be known of God, and so could not honour him as was his due. This move on God's part was, therefore, self-defeating. So he chose the people of Israel, from amongst the whole world of ungodly nations, with the intention of arranging that

he be suitably glorified through them. This would seem to make sense if God's approach was not simply to restore to Israel the capability to perceive what could be known about him, but to come to some alternative arrangement.

Holding together the gospel revelation of the wrath of God, and what we know of Judaism, we can imagine that the reasoning behind the election of Israel might have gone something like this: If God were to give specific instructions to the people, the knowledge of what he required of men, which had become obscured, would be available to them once more. What they could no longer recognize by themselves would be spelled out to them. Accompanying this set of instructions would be an indication of what God had to offer them. Without actually revealing himself, God would be calling on them to act as he commanded, and believe that he would do as he promised. Those who believed would follow the rules, be freed from idolatry and immorality, and be enabled to live a life of peace and prosperity, in accordance with God's intention for all mankind. By their believing action they would be giving God the acknowledgement he claims, and so be restored to relationship with him. This being the case, it would be possible to describe the election of Israel as a creative act of justification of the ungodly.

In accomplishing this, his 'eternal power and deity' would be indisputably revealed, and in a form that could not fail to be attractive to all nations. The truth about God could then no longer be suppressed or falsified. Thus, through Israel, he would be acknowledged as God, and the punishment of ignorance would be removed. In this way, man could be reckoned righteous, without God having to compromise his own righteousness. In short, we could say that in the act of showing himself as him who justifies the ungodly, God, in the same act would again show himself as Creator of 'the things that have been made'.

Returning to Romans, we can summarise Rom 1:18-32 by saying that the gospel reveals that the root of all evil and immorality is the ungodliness of man who because he refuses to acknowledge God, loses the ability to do so, and instead is conformed in his understanding and behaviour to the lesser things he chooses, thereby rendering himself liable to the penalty of death. Since he is rendered incapable of doing the only thing that could save him, he is shown by the gospel to be in a situation from which he cannot extract himself. Hence, if God is to

justify anyone, it can be none other than the ungodly.

2:1-11

In our earlier discussion of 2:1-11, we concluded that Paul was here condemning the attitude of Jewish Christians regarding the immorality of Gentile Christians, but at the same time warning them all against improper conduct.⁷⁶ There is some debate over the connection between this passage and what precedes it. If we are correct in saying that the gospel reveals an understanding of righteousness and ungodliness hitherto unknown, then it seems reasonable to suppose that this concept is of significance in the ensuing argument. In this case τὰ αὐτὰ may be seen to refer as much to suppressing of the truth as to the list of specific immoralities. Since all men are guilty of not giving God due recognition, they all fall victim to futility, senselessness, and foolishness, and hence to an accompanying improper conduct of some kind.

The Jewish Christians, we may suppose, considered that the Torah gave them a standard by which to judge behaviour, and hence the acceptability of any particular person for membership of the community of God's people. They would also have believed it provided a means of atoning for improper conduct. It would seem, from our study of other literature, that it was assumed within Judaism that God's criterion in judging man righteous was the carrying out of the specific instructions of the Torah, with, of course, its built in opportunities for forgiveness and repentance. Now, in light of the gospel revelation of the wrath of God, it can be seen that this perception of the Torah is concerned in the first instance with *countering* the manifestation of ungodliness, rather than with *indicating* what constitutes it. Knowing the Torah is not of itself sufficient to counteract man's distorted perception of himself, God and the world. So no man can afford to be complacent. It is not knowledge of the Torah that honours God, but the lives of those who *faithfully* obey it. Only God can see and judge 'according to the truth' (2:2). The truth is that it is the responsibility of created man to acknowledge and honour his Creator, God. This, in fact, is the often overlooked central requirement of the Torah, rightly understood.⁷⁷ Only God can judge whether this is being done to his satisfaction in any specific instance.

From this point of view, the idea that one man can judge another is ludicrous. The Torah is given to the Jew to help him, not to condemn others. If he uses it to judge others or appeals to it in judging himself, he is imagining that it gives him some claim on God. This is contrary to its purpose of enabling Israel to know how to bring honour to God. In the final analysis, it is how a man has behaved, rather than what he has possessed or professed, that indicates the true state of his relationship with his Creator.

Thus, when Paul says that God 'will render to every man according to his works' (2:6), it is because the works *reflect* a man's allegiance: what a man does is a manifestation of who he is in relation to God. This is clear from 1:18ff. A man who shows by what he does that he seeks 'glory and honour and immortality' (2:7), can be said to be wanting to be conformed to the image of God, as he was created to be. By thus seeking to take his proper place within creation, he shows himself willing to bring honour to his Creator.⁷⁸ From the point of view of apocalyptic theology, which anticipates an ultimate, once-for-all judgement not unlike the cultic judgements of the Old Testament, it can be said that such a man will at that time be granted those things which are God's gifts to the righteous, namely, 'eternal life' (2:7), 'glory and honour and peace' (2:10). So in effect Paul argues that such a man will be reckoned righteous.

Conversely, a man who does what he does in order to bring honour to himself rather than his Creator, thereby imagining he can usurp the status which is God's alone, shows by his behaviour that he is determined, not by the truth, but by unrighteousness (2:8f). He chooses to remain loyal to the lie about the order of creation perpetrated by man (1:25). Consequently, God allows him to remain victim to his own ignorance. Then, at the final judgement, God will maintain his righteousness by responding with 'wrath and fury' to such a man, thereby causing him considerable distress (2:8f). What form this divine 'wrath and fury' will take, Paul does not indicate.

The climax of this section is Paul's radical assertion, growing directly from his argument, that the criterion for this final judgement is the same for Jews and Gentiles, 'For God shows no partiality' (2:11). This must have come as quite a surprise, especially to Jews who knew that as God's elect, they were especially

beloved of God. The only distinction, according to Paul, is that the Jews will be the first to learn their fate. This presumably, would be a bonus for those Jews who had sought to behave in a manner appropriate to their relationship with God, and an additional affliction to those who had not.

This approach would appear to be consistent with the view that the law was designed to enable the Jews to live in a way that brought honour to God, even though they, like everyone else, were fundamentally ungodly. Taken as an opportunity to glorify God, knowledge of the law would give a Jew advantage over the average Gentile. Taken as an opportunity for self-glorification, knowledge of the law would bring a Jew greater condemnation than if he had not known it at all. This would appear to be Paul's belief judging by the following verses.

2:12-16

Having made this controversial statement that ultimately the judgement of who is righteous and who is not is not to be confined to Israel, but is an equally open question with regard to Gentiles, Paul now explains how this can be so. The explanation focuses on the connection between judgement and the law. This supports our view that a misunderstanding of what role the law was intended to play was causing confusion or conflict in Rome.

It would appear from Paul's argument that the Jewish Christians could not see how a Gentile Christian could be judged righteous without having known and obeyed the Torah.⁷⁹ This problem arises from the Jewish assumption that at the final judgement obedience to the law would be the criterion which separated the ungodly from the righteous. Because of this assumption, the Jewish Christians thought that the Gentile Christians ought also to keep the law. This conviction may have been one of stubborn legalism. On the other hand it could well reflect a genuine concern on the part of the Jewish Christians anxious for the Gentiles in their community.

Paul's answer to this problem fits with our theory about the position of the people of Israel in the eyes of the Creator. All men are of themselves ungodly as argued

in 1:18-32. Hence any righteousness that might be exhibited amongst man is initiated by God when he establishes alternative relationships with them. If the human behaviour appropriate to the relationship between God and the people of Israel is to obey the law, then obedience to the law is the measure of their righteousness within that particular relationship. The fact that this relationship is available to every Jew is of no value in itself. Judgement is based on the extent to which a Jew has taken advantage of the opportunity to honour God that the law makes available to him.

The situation is just the same for Gentiles. Since they were not given the law it is irrelevant when it comes to God's judgement of them. What is relevant is whether they have been a credit to God in the way available to them. It is reasonable to suppose that their God-honouring behaviour would in many ways parallel the behaviour of Torah-keeping Jews. Their judgement however will be based on the extent to which they have responded to whatever rules of behaviour God had made known to them, perhaps without their even knowing the origin of these rules. Without a separate, written law, the Gentiles were, in a sense, disadvantaged, in that they would have had to discern for themselves the call to honour God, as opposed to the numerous other calls from the lesser gods of their own making. Only at the day of judgement will they see the extent of their failure. At the same time, however, the odds against them will also become apparent, so that they may well be shown to have done better than first appearances suggested (2:15f).

Clearly, the above argument does not derive directly from 2:12-16. Rather, we have endeavoured to show how Paul's presentation of what the gospel reveals enables us to reconstruct the logic behind the assertions in this passage. In particular, this theory gives us a way of understanding how Paul can in one and the same breath claim both that Jews and Gentiles will be treated the same, and that they will be treated differently.

Without warning or explanation, Paul now introduces the idea that Christ Jesus is to be integrally involved in the judgement, and that it is 'the secrets of men' that God is to judge (2:16b). From the way he says this, we infer that Paul is simply stating a presupposition that could be taken for granted. This suggests

that all the preceding discussion ought, in fact, to be read in light of this.⁸⁰ If the man Jesus was, at his resurrection, declared righteous, he may be regarded either as the measure, or as the best judge, of human behaviour. Alternatively, Paul may mean that his gospel about Jesus Christ affirms what he has said about a final judgement. The main point, however, must be that the involvement of Christ transcends the distinction between Jew and Gentile as far as human opportunity and motivation are concerned. Whether Jew or Gentile, someone who has heard 'the gospel of God. . . concerning his son' now knows what God requires, and what are his own limitations with regard to meeting that requirement. Those who have heard the gospel now know that at the anticipated judgement, the significant division will not be between those who knew the Torah and those who did not, but between those who sought to honour God and those who did not. This is consistent with the idea that righteousness is the behaviour appropriate to a particular relationship under specific circumstances.

The fact that Paul says it is 'the secrets of men' that are to be judged re-affirms that it is not just appearances or external behaviour that God is concerned about. Keeping the law involves more than just going through the motions of carrying out particular instructions, as was pointed out by Deutero-Isaiah (Is 43:22f). Obedience which is not an expression of allegiance is not obedience at all, as far as the Old and New Testaments are concerned.⁸¹ Thus the point that no man can presume to judge another on God's behalf is also re-affirmed.

2:17-24

This passage continues the explanation of Paul's assertions of 2:6-11 which he summarises with the declaration that God shows no partiality in judgement. We have said⁸² that 2:12-16 addresses the question of how the Gentiles, who do not possess the law, can nevertheless be judged righteous. The focus of this passage is the question of how a Jew, who *does* possess the law, can nevertheless be judged unrighteous. The rather sarcastic tone and rhetorical style of this address must have been quite hard-hitting. Although it is basically just illustrative of the theory alluded to already in 2:13, the structure of the passage is such that Paul appears to affirm them in their confidence, then twists that very confidence

around showing it up as complacency, thereby catching them offguard and taking the ground from under their feet. What Paul says here presents nothing beyond what he has already alluded to, or what we have argued in elaborating and speculating upon the preceding text. Detailed discussion would therefore appear to be superfluous. Suffice it to say that we find here firm confirmation of the understanding we have presented. In particular, in 2:23f we have, for the first time, specific indication that *the purpose of the law was indeed to enable the Jews and consequently the Gentiles, to give honour to God*. These verses also show the fairness of the suggestion that an unrighteous Jew can expect to be treated more severely than an unrighteous Gentile. While the Gentile in his unrighteousness fails, in a neutral sort of way, to honour God, the Jew, because he claims to be a witness to God, actively presents to the world a false, negative, and hence blasphemous view of the God to whom all honour is due.

It is perhaps worth noting, in passing, that this passage presents the Jews' self-image in terms remarkably reminiscent of the Qumran community writings discussed above.⁸³ This is not to say that there was any particular influence or inter-dependence, but rather to suggest that the beliefs specified by Paul which appear to parallel Qumran understandings may well have been accompanied by other additional points of contact. In particular, the idea that what separates the elect from the rest of humanity is the possession of truth and knowledge (2:20), is of the greatest importance in Qumran.

This knowledge embodied in the law is regarded as evidence of the recipients being especially favoured by God.⁸⁴ Conversely, because the law reveals the will of God it is held in the highest possible regard. Those who possess this truth are reckoned to be children of light, the rest of humanity being in darkness. In this sense, the sect was particularly exclusivist. To these people alone was righteousness made available, so only they could hope to be spared destruction at the apocalyptic judgement. The sect was not exclusivist, however, in the sense of keeping its knowledge to itself. Recognizing that only God can know whom he has elected, there was a firm commitment to proclamation. Outsiders who responded to the truth and teaching that the sect alone could offer were assumed to be elect and welcomed into the community. Once in the community, one could be confident of being one of the righteous, since even if one strayed from the

rigid lawkeeping that was required, God could be counted on to make up the deficiency and maintain one in righteousness, simply because that was his desire for his elect. Major or consistent aberrations would lead to expulsion from the community on the assumption that the offender was not one of the elect after all.

From what Paul has said already (2:13) and his charges in 2:21-24, it is apparent that this last practice, or a less radical form of it, was not part of the lifestyle of the Jews he was addressing. Rather, it would appear that, in Paul's view, these Jews were so inclined to place all their confidence in God's election of them as his righteous people, that they had become complacent where they ought to have been repentent (2:4).

This is not necessarily to say that they did not follow cultic practice, repenting for each particular act of disobedience, since evidence suggests that the Jews of the time were meticulous in their attempt to keep the precepts of the law. Rather, it seems probable that Paul's criticism here is of the order of Deutero-Isaiah's, namely, that the repentance of Israel did not reflect meaningful allegiance (Is 43:22ff) to God himself. Alternatively, it may be that the rabbinic warning against complacency, "If a man said, 'I will sin and repent, and sin again and repent', he will be given no chance to repent"⁸⁵ most accurately reflects the attitude Paul is criticizing. Such complacency, Paul implies, stands in the way of God making his contribution to the maintenance of the offender's righteousness. This is consistent with the views presented in the Old Testament⁸⁶, the intertestamental literature⁸⁷ and rabbinic literature. Sanders⁸⁸, for example, points out that, in Rabbinic Judaism, failure to repent was tantamount to electing to withdraw from the community. In other words, one could say that a Jew who failed to repent of his disobedience to the law was in effect choosing to be a Jew no longer, thereby cutting himself off from being maintained in righteousness. On the basis of this it is clear that *Paul's criticism is of the behaviour and attitude of the people he is addressing, rather than of Judaism itself.*

Apart from this difference, Paul's depiction of the Jewish-Christian understanding of the law and their own Jewishness, is sufficiently similar to the Qumran community in the ideas actually listed, for us to speculate that a further similarity existed, namely, the same sort of exclusivism. Those, and only those, who

were part of the community whose knowledge of God and his will was derived from the law could ever be spared at the apocalyptic judgement. Hence, proclamation of this knowledge would be directed solely toward bringing outsiders into that community and requiring the same obedience from them. Because of the new factor of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Jewish Christians would differ from the Qumran community in that their proclamation would extend beyond the confines of Judaism and include the Gentiles in their invitation to participation in the community and hence to obedience to the Torah. If this was indeed the case, then it is only fair to conclude that the attitude of the Jewish Christians towards their Gentile brothers had at least a significant element of genuine pastoral concern, as suggested above⁸⁹. This concern should not simply be written off as some sort of inappropriate ethical pettiness, claim to moral superiority, or self-seeking piety as has frequently been assumed, though there can be no doubt from what Paul says in 2:1-10, that questions of moral behaviour were very much a point of the issue.

While this reconstruction of the scenario is inevitably guesswork, it cannot be denied that the whole of Paul's argument so far can be seen to address such a situation. From 1:18 on, the discussion can be seen to be directed towards showing the falsity of the basic assumption that righteousness is available only through the law. By pointing out that the sole desire of God is that he be given the acknowledgement and honour that is his right as Creator, the significance of the law is relativised, and the criterion for the apocalyptic judgement is shown not to be possession and knowledge of the law, but the living out of its *intention* that God be honoured, irrespective of the source of the knowledge that this is what God requires. As we have seen, this means that it is possible for Gentiles who do not have the law to be righteous (2:12-16). Equally it means that no amount of knowledge of the law can guarantee one is righteous, if such knowledge has not been put into practice (2:17-24).

2:24-29

This passage further supports our view that the Jewish Christians were focussing on community membership⁹⁰, in an exclusivist way, rather than on what God re-

quires, in their understanding of what constituted righteousness. As we noted in the previous chapter⁹¹, circumcision for the Jew was the unique sign of membership of the community of God's chosen people. It was designed to be a physical indication of acceptance of the relationship with God offered to him. With this relationship, appropriate behaviour, or righteousness, on God's side, was to provide the sort of peace and prosperity summed up in the word *shālôm*, and on man's side, to honour God by obeying the law given him at the establishment of that relationship.

Paul has already indicated in 2:13, and spelled out in 2:17-24, that having been given the law is not of itself sufficient for a man to be judged righteous. A claim to membership of the community on the basis of possession of the law is false if God is dishonoured by disobedience, and repentance is lacking. Rather a man's righteousness and thus as Judaism itself declares, his true relationship to the community, is reckoned on the basis of whether or not he actually *does* what the law requires. Further, (2:12-16), Paul pointed out that logically it is possible to do this with or without knowledge of the specific precepts of the law, so that *possession of the law cannot even be regarded as a pre-requisite for entry into the community of those who honour God* by being conformed to his will, and accordingly, presumably receive the promised *shālôm*.

In exactly the same way, Paul argues in 2:25-29 that having been circumcised is not of itself sufficient for a man to be judged righteous. A claim to membership of the community on the basis of circumcision, which entitles one to receive the law, is false if God is dishonoured by the circumcised's disobedience to that law, where, of course, a significant part of this disobedience must be the failure to repent. Such disobedience, as Judaism itself declares, amounts to withdrawal from the community. Thus the physical circumcision ceases to be meaningful. A circumcised Jew who fails to keep the law, in effect withdraws from the community, and so joins the ranks of the non-members of the community, the uncircumcised, and thus abandons his claim to be a Jew. Conversely, it makes sense to say that a person who, without actually taking on the physical sign of circumcision, shows, by keeping the law, that his rightful place is within the community of the circumcised, can, to all intents and purposes, be regarded as circumcised. Such a person, who behaves in accordance with the law even though, because he

is not physically circumcised, he does not have access to the law in its written form, shows up those who have not made use of their advantage of having it as deserving to be condemned.

2:29 concludes the section, and the whole chapter, with a positive assertion that ties in with 1:18ff and introduces a new idea that is yet to be elaborated. From 1:21,25, and our previous chapter, we know that what God requires of man in general is that he acknowledge and give thanks to God, worshipping him as Creator of the world, acceding to his Lordship. What he requires of the Jew is acknowledgement of him as Creator of Israel, allegiance to him who justified them and promised them *shālôm*. Honouring God with this allegiance and trust is not something external, but a fundamental internal attitude. Real circumcision, the true mark that a Jew has genuinely accepted the relationship God has offered him, is therefore made on the heart, as representative of the orientation of the whole being of the person. The fact that this is not literal means that it is not something that can simply be carried out by following a written instruction from the law. As yet, Paul has given no clue as to what he means by spiritual, and how that can be seen to contrast with literal, beyond the contrast between internal and external to which he has already pointed. The possibility that a non-Jew, in the physical, external sense, can be a true Jew, presupposes the gospel revelation of the righteousness of God, since, as far as we know, there was no other way for him to know the requirements of the law, without having it in its written form.⁹²

The concluding remark that the true Jew is one who receives his praise 'not from men but from God', parallels 2:16 and reminds the reader that God alone is in a position to judge what is pleasing to him. To judge another, or to modify one's behaviour in order to meet the demands of one's fellows in relation to external things is inappropriate and misguided. In relation to the particular context, as we surmise it to be, Paul is demonstrating by this argument that the Roman Christians are getting distracted by an irrelevancy if they are supposing that Gentiles should be circumcised and obey the written precepts of the law in order truly to participate in the community of God's chosen people.

3:1-8

Since 2:9-29 has established that the Jews are on the same footing as the Gentiles under judgement, and therefore it is just as possible for a person outwith the cultic community of Judaism to be a true Jew as it is for a Jew himself, and conversely, for a Jew by race to be not a true Jew, the distinctiveness of Israel as God's chosen people appears to be called into question.⁹³ The immediately obvious analysis of this passage is that Paul, using the diatribe style polemically, is answering an objector, real or imagined, assuring him in vv.2-4 that God will be faithful to his promise to the Jews, Then, changing the subject in vv.5-8, again in diatribe style, he answers a problem which arises from the way he has answered the objection, since it appears to support a view which he rejects, but of which he has actually been accused (v.8).⁹⁴

We would like to suggest, however, that the whole passage forms more of a unity than this analysis implies. In the trial speeches in Deutero-Isaiah⁹⁵ Israel brings accusations against God for failing them. In particular, in Ezek 18:25 it is charged that "The way of the Lord is not just". Against this, the Lord defends himself by claiming that it is in fact Israel whose ways are not just, so that he will rightfully judge each according to his ways and not automatically save or condemn as they expect (Ezek 18:25-32)⁹⁶. It seems that the present passage can be regarded in a similar way. Using the diatribe pedagogically, Paul adopts the approach of presenting propositions which have obviously ludicrous consequences, thereby showing up the implications of the position he is aiming to correct, and hence demonstrating with considerable impact the falsity of that position.⁹⁷ Rom 3:1-8 may be seen to represent a trial in which the Jews are bringing a charge of injustice against God, for judging *all* men according to their works, with the implications Paul has spelled out. If we speak in terms of righteousness, we would say that the charge is that God, by judging all men according to their works, and so condemning some Jews, and accepting some Gentiles, is not behaving in a manner appropriate to his particular relationship with the Jews, in which he is their God and they are his people, and hence is unrighteous. Paul speaks for both sides. It is not certain how much of this is a real issue raised by the Jews, and how much it is simply Paul, either anticipating objections, or simply using a new, but familiar, approach, to further his argument. It may be that he is

picking up a general feeling of discontent, or what he sees as an issue behind conflict in Rome, rather than things specifically said, v.8 apart. Nevertheless, it plays such an essential part in his developing argument, that it certainly cannot be regarded as a mere aside, as is sometimes implied by commentators.

The cross examination begins with the questions, 'Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?' On the surface, the conclusions Paul has drawn seem to challenge the validity of the whole Old Testament or, alternatively, suggest that God has effectively abandoned his unique relationship to Israel, along with its accompanying promise and demands. As Cranfield puts it,

If . . . there really is no advantage of the Jew and no profit in circumcision, this must mean either that the OT is a false witness or else that God has not been faithful to his word. The question raised is nothing less than the question of the credibility of God.⁹⁸

Paul, now speaking for the defence, i.e., for God, takes up both of the possible implications behind the question. In declaring that *the Jews certainly do have an advantage*, as he has in fact asserted already in ch. 2⁹⁹, he affirms, firstly¹⁰⁰, that 'they have been entrusted with the oracles of God' (v.2). The emphasis here is that it was indeed the words of God that formed their sacred tradition. It seems most likely that 'the oracles of God' refers to the whole Old Testament, with all its varying aspects of God's self-revelation and the history of Israel regarding itself as his chosen people. But perhaps, in view of the context, it refers particularly to the calling of Israel and the establishment of the covenant, in which God promises the Jews continuity and a life of security, prosperity and harmony, in their own land provided they live out their acceptance of his promise by keeping the law.¹⁰¹ So Paul is here affirming that it truly was God who had done this, that Israel's self-understanding was indeed valid, and hence that he is *not challenging the validity of the Old Testament*.¹⁰²

In v.3, Paul continues the defence by taking up the second possible implication of suggesting the Jews have no advantage, namely, that with the introduction of the gospel, God has abandoned his promise to Israel. By the use of rhetorical questions, Paul establishes common ground with the accusers, then extends

the logic to deal with the issue in question. The idea that some Jews were unfaithful would be accepted by any faithful Jew. The fact that some Jews had never believed¹⁰³ the oracles of God, making no attempt to involve themselves in the covenant, or had at some point completely abandoned their involvement, would have been self-evident. But this would never have been interpreted as unfaithfulness on God's part. It did not call into question God's faithfulness to his promise for those who did believe. Nor, presumably, for those unbelievers who subsequently changed their minds. There could be little doubt that Paul's emphatic *μὴ γένοιτο* (v.4) would have been echoed by those amongst his hearers who could be described as 'true Jews'.

Having thus won the agreement of the prosecutors, Paul extends the logic so that they are forced to agree that even if there were not a single believer, God could still not be accused of unfaithfulness: 'Let God be true though every man be false' (v.4). The latter part of this assertion, *πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης*, is a declaration conveyed in Ps 116:11. There the reference is to a man's experience of the falseness of his fellow human beings, and not a reference to God. Nevertheless, the context suggests that *ψεύστης* refers to the conviction that no man can be depended upon; only God can be trusted. Thus this declaration can be seen to be not about truth and lies, but about *the reliability of God to keep his word as opposed to the unreliability of men*. The Psalmist "had not ceased to trust in God, but he had learned not to depend on men."¹⁰⁴ In the present context, the sense would seem to be that God can be trusted to keep his agreement with Israel, even if there is no-one who can be trusted to keep to their side of it. If this is so, Paul has already begun to move beyond the case of the clear-cut believer, to the case of those who *claim* to believe but cannot be trusted to live up to that claim, and so to be addressing the question of God's treatment of the Jew who is not a real Jew, the issue at the heart of the trial.

Käsemann draws attention to the use of *γινέσθω* here, suggesting that it be rendered, 'May it become apparent'. His point is that until the claim that God is true is fully recognized, some doubt remains as to its validity; the final verification, or otherwise, will come only at the final judgement:

For this God's deity still awaits its definitive revelation, and prayer

is to be made for it. From the perspective of the end of history . . .
γινέσθω ἀληθής really means: May it become true and attest itself
so.¹⁰⁵

This being the case, the idea that this whole passage is concerned with putting God on trial is supported, as is our suggestion that at this point a 'true Jew' would be in agreement with Paul, while a disobedient Jew would still be challenging God as unjust. In fact Käsemann suggests that this is an ongoing process:

At this point one sees plainly that Paul regards history as God's trial with the world which will come to an end only in the last judgement and will result solely in the victory or defeat of one or the other party.¹⁰⁶

While we do not necessarily dispute this point, we would be inclined to say that, in asserting it at this stage, Käsemann goes significantly beyond what is the immediate issue for Paul in explaining to the Jewish Christians their situation. Although there is a reference to 'every man' in the following clause it is the uniqueness of the Jews and man's falsity with respect to the covenant that are under discussion in this passage. The most we would want to say is that this quotation implicitly hints at the direction Paul's argument is going.

Paul now moves to a scripture quotation which is quite clearly related to unlawful behaviour. The whole of Ps 51 is very much in harmony with what Paul has been saying, and what he goes on to say subsequently. In seeking God's mercy, the Psalmist confesses his transgressions, the evil things he has done, and his sin and iniquity. The fact that sin and iniquity are in the singular and the transgressions and evil things done in the plural, may indicate some level of insight into the distinction Paul seems to make between sin and immorality in Rom 1:18ff (vv.1-4). In v.5 the psalmist declares that he was sinful from conception, which may be understood as a poetic acknowledgement of his fundamental ungodliness. This, and Paul's point that being a true Jew is about something inward, of the heart, is supported by the Psalmist's request to be rescued from his sinfulness by having God 'create' (*bārā*) in him a 'clean heart' and a 'new and right spirit' (v.10), because he knows this is what God desires (v.6). He requests this, not for his

own sake, but so that he can bring others to the same position. He concludes by asking God to treat Israel well and to continue to bring his promise to fruition, presumably despite the continuing existence of many sinners, in order that by this means he may win the people over to living out their side of the covenant, that is, that they might praise and delight God and have joy in being his people (vv.12ff). This suggests that Paul may have had the whole Psalm in mind, and that his quotation of Ps 51:4 in the trial scene was of greater significance than the immediate point in his argument.

The psalm is attributed to David who, in acknowledgement of the wrongfulness of his behaviour toward Bathsheba, recognizes that above all, it was against *God* that this wrongful behaviour was directed.¹⁰⁷ As such, to use Pauline terminology as we understand it, he sinned against God in that, by deliberately choosing to be guided by his desire for Bathsheba rather than his desire to please God, he chose to obey the god of sexual desire as his Lord and so ignored the Lordship of God, the rightful Lord of his nation.¹⁰⁸ Having thus recognized his wrongful act as sin against God, he goes on to acknowledge that it is not only right that he be judged by God, but necessary, if God is to be just, since, as we saw in Rom 1:18, God's righteousness must have its reverse side, wrath. The behaviour appropriate to God within the covenant relationship is to exercise his wrath on those who fail to give him due acknowledgement by rebelling against his Lordship, just as much as it is appropriate for him to provide *shālôm* for those who do not rebel. It is this that the psalmist acknowledges in the passage which Paul quotes. As Kirkpatrick paraphrases it¹⁰⁹, "that thy righteousness and holiness may be declared and vindicated when Thou dost pronounce sentence on my sin." Kirkpatrick points to the difficulty arising from the text's suggestion that the purpose of sin is to demonstrate God's unrighteousness, so that an objection against punishment for sin seems reasonable, as Paul, too, is aware. Kirkpatrick's solution to the problem is to say that,

Probably however we are meant to understand that man's sin brings out in clearer light the justice and holiness of God, who pronounces sentence upon it. . . . The consequence of [the Psalmist's] sin, and therefore in a sense its purpose (for nothing is independent of the sovereign will of God), is to enhance before men the justice and holiness of God.¹¹⁰

This view is consistent with Paul's understanding of sin in Rom 1:18ff, in which those who reject his Lordship are consigned to sin, to obedience to the lesser Lords of their choosing, and hence to wrong-doing in conformity to these lesser gods. From this point of view it is even clearer that sin is to demonstrate God's righteousness since it is not simply the case that man is sinful in contrast to God, but that *God himself creates sin as a punishment*, to demonstrate that his absolute claim on mankind has been ignored or rejected.

It may be that Paul's use of Ps 51:4 differs slightly from the original, since the LXX version he quotes contains an ambiguity which he may have been exploiting. It is not clear from the context whether κρίνεσθαί is to be understood as a middle, and so conforming with the interpretation above, or as a passive. If it is to be read as passive, so that the meaning is that man is judging God, rather than the reverse, then the idea that it is actually God on trial, charged with injustice, is reinforced. Since the middle, however, has the sense "to contend in a law-suit"¹¹¹, the meaning is not substantially different, the idea that God will be vindicated in his judging men for their sin implies the same notion of a trial between man and God¹¹², and at the same time picks up the issue of God's judgement of the Jews which prompted the trial in the first place. Nevertheless, in view of our understanding that it is specifically God on trial here, we prefer, with Käsemann¹¹³, to take κρίνεσθαί as a passive.

Paul also alters the text by replacing the LXX subjunctive, νικήσης with the future, νικήσεις. This supports Käsemann's interpretation of γινέσθω in the first part of v.4. It is now clear that Paul is taking a notion which the Jews would accept as part of their day to day existence within the covenant, and claiming that the same principles apply to the final judgement. In our opinion, Käsemann again goes beyond the immediate text in seeing this as applying to the history of the whole world, rather than specifically to the Jews. Apart from this, his interpretation of this quotation is to be affirmed as consistent with the understanding of Romans that emerged in our previous chapter, and is emerging here:

What Paul gathers from the Psalm quotation is that the world history ends with God's victory over his foes and the manifestation of his justice over his creatures . . . If this interpretation is correct, this text

. . . is to be regarded as a key passage for the whole of Paul's doctrine of justification, since it lays bare the connection of this doctrine with apocalyptic and explains its cosmic dimension.¹¹⁴

Before proceeding, we return to a significant point which was simply passed over in our discussion of v.3, in order not to detract from the logic of v.3-4 at that stage. This is the introduction of the term *πίστις* to the argument. The only previous mentions of it occur in the introduction, where Paul commends the Romans for their well-known faith (1:8) and speaks of being mutually encouraged by his and theirs (1:12), and especially, where he describes his task as an apostle as being 'to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations' (1:5). It is this latter reference which is of particular interest since, if Paul in effect sees this as his reason for writing to the Romans, we can assume that any use of *πίστις* in the course of the argument is likely to be significant, and not just a passing reference. So it is important to see what 3:3 has to say about it.

The most striking thing is that, to the question "Is God just?", Paul answers, "God is faithful." He shows this by equating the falseness of men with their unfaithfulness, or unbelief, and illustrates this by referring to sin and transgression of the law. Thus the righteousness of God is simply parallel with the faithfulness of God. Paul sees no need to spell this out. He simply takes it as understood. Likewise, unfaithfulness of man is automatically parallel with sinfulness, that is, unrighteousness. We can, therefore, assume the same sort of parallel if we speak in terms of Lordship. Transgression, as rebellion against God's Lordship, amounts to unfaithfulness or unbelief. Conversely, then, we can conjecture that *to submit to God's Lordship is to have faith*. This, however, goes beyond what Paul actually says in v.3. Käsemann, in his discussion of this occurrence of *πίστις*, points to the importance Paul attaches to it, despite the notion of the faithfulness of God being most unusual for Paul:

Verses 2b-3 are unmistakably oriented to the theme of *πίστις*. This means covenant faithfulness and corresponds to *ἀπιστία* as defection from the covenant. Apart from the formula *πιστὸς ὁ θεός* in 1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 1 Thess 5:24 . . . the motif of God's faithfulness is explicitly expressed only here in this way. Nevertheless, it

is given extraordinary emphasis by its relationship to the antitheses that follow: 'truth' and 'falsehood', 'righteousness' and 'unrighteousness'. Relations within the covenant are indicated thereby. In good OT fashion God's truth is his reliability, which upholds covenant and promise, while human falsehood characterizes human inconsistency even within the covenant. It is only here, then, that Paul identifies πίστις and δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ by making them parallel, as is possible from the OT understanding of God's righteousness as his prevailing covenant faithfulness. Along the same lines ἀδικία is not primarily moral defection but rejection of God's law as this is established with the covenant.¹¹⁵

Käsemann goes on to speak of God's faithfulness and hence his righteousness as power, and suggests that Paul here uses the idea of covenant universalistically, switching to the notion of the new covenant¹¹⁶, but again this does not seem to be upheld by the present text or context, nor even with his own interpretation quoted here. While we would agree that ultimately Paul is to apply his reasoning to God's relationship to the whole creation, as was demonstrated in the previous chapter, we see no basis for reading this in at this stage. In our view, the question of the whole world does not emerge until v.6, and even then the concern is still with the self-perception of the Jews in the Roman community from the point of view of Judaism rather than of Christianity (to use an anachronism).

We return now to the ongoing trial. The proceedings, if our interpretation is correct, began with the charge that God is unjust if he is to judge the Jews on the same basis as the Gentiles, without regard to their possession of the law or circumcision which marked them off as his chosen people. If these now counted for nothing then it would appear either that God's words were not true, or that God was not being true to his word. Paul has denied both aspects of this charge, reminding his hearers that it is part of their tradition that God is always righteous, irrespective of the behaviour of men, and that indeed a significant part of that righteousness is to punish those who transgress against him. Indeed, he ought only to be charged with being unjust if he does *not* exercise judgement on those who reject his claim on them.

At first sight, it seems that Paul, having said this, realizes how it could be or has been misinterpreted, and so digresses from the question of the advantage of

the Jews in order to present and refute such a misinterpretation.¹¹⁷ In our view, however, vv.5-7 are actually an integral part of the trial and indeed the most critical part of the argument in this section¹¹⁸. Only v.8 is specifically related to Paul's experience, this being prompted by vv.5-7 rather than by the psalm quotation itself.

Since the prosecution have no choice but to concede to the justice of God judging them, as Paul has demonstrated, he now presents them as trying a different tack. They can accept that they deserve to be judged but, in view of their being God's chosen people, inheritors of his promise, surely God is unjust if he does not treat them differently from the Gentiles, if not in exercising judgement, at least in his punishment of them. The language used is specifically related to the covenant. As Käsemann observed in his discussion of vv.2b-3, "ἀδικία is not primarily moral defection but rejection of God's law as this is established with the covenant."¹¹⁹ The whole purpose of the covenant was to reveal God's righteousness, demonstrating his rightful claim on Israel, and, through them, on the world. Since, according to vv.1-4, God achieves his purpose whether the Jews are obedient or not, surely God is unjust to treat them as if he had not. The fact that, in asking whether God is not unjust for this, Paul has the prosecution using *μή* rather than *οὐχ* suggests that he knew it was too absurd ever to be seriously presented as an argument, a point he reinforces by again noting the very human nature of the challenge.¹²⁰

That God is described as inflicting his wrath on those Jews who rebel against him is most significant here, since he has already given considerable content to the notion in 1:18ff, and is not merely using a general term for something unpleasant at the final judgement. The protest against God's wrath, that Paul puts into his hearers' mouths, becomes in effect an acknowledgement that disobedient Jews just as the rest of the world have failed to give God due acknowledgement. This shows that *a Jew, when he transgresses God's law, is ungodly in precisely the same way as a Gentile.*¹²¹ Hence Paul's emphatic rejection of this claim (v.6) takes the form of a rhetorical question, the sense of which appears to be, how can God judge the rest of the world on a different basis from his judgement of the Jews, when they are all guilty of the same crime of failing to acknowledge God's Lordship.¹²² That would be unjust, and contrary to God's declaration in

Ex 23:7 that he will not justify the ungodly—on the basis of their belonging to a particular group, or having some claim on him.¹²³

As in v.5, the charge against God in v.7, is phrased in such a way as to amount to an acceptance of Paul's preceding counter-charge. It is not simply the same point¹²⁴, expressed more as an objection¹²⁵ or more personally or concretely.¹²⁶ This is apparent from the fact that the protest is no longer against God inflicting his wrath, but against being condemned as a sinner where, as we learnt from 1:18ff, abandoning men to the power of sin is the outworking of God's wrath, the punishment inflicted by him on those who fail to give him due acknowledgement as Creator.¹²⁷ Thus Paul has put into the mouths of the prosecution the tacit admission that they are indeed fundamentally no different from the Gentiles.¹²⁸ They, too, are part of that mankind which suppresses the truth about God, failing to honour, thank, worship, serve, or in any way acknowledge him as God. They, too, have given up his glory. Thus Paul has shown that his opening passage, which appeared at first sight to be addressed basically to the Gentiles, is equally applicable to disobedient Jews, as, with hindsight, we now see confirmed by the parallelling of ἀσέβεια and ἀδικία in 1:18.¹²⁹

From this we see that, although the logic of the charge against God is the same here as in v.5, the context is now that of *the relationship between the Creator of the world and all mankind, rather than between the Creator of Israel and his people*. Man's charge now, in the continuing trial, is that all men have *already* been inflicted with an interim punishment by which God has demonstrated his total claim on all creation, so that the truth about him is indisputable and his glory is thereby abundantly clear. Since due glory is what he desires he ought to be satisfied, and not demand more by inflicting death (1:32) or further wrath, tribulation and distress (2:8f) at the final judgement. Käsemann observes "that God's righteousness and glory are interchanged almost incidentally."¹³⁰ It seems to us, however, that there is a difference between the two. God's righteousness is his claim on mankind to have his glory acknowledged. To use the terminology derived from our background study, the appropriate behaviour for God as Creator is to demand of men that they honour him by setting forth and responding to that glory (1:18ff). We would agree with Käsemann, however, that Paul's presentation, in these chapters, of the gospel revelation of the wrath of God, can be

understood to show that God's righteousness is not his distributive justice, "but the power which establishes its right to the creative."¹³¹ The Creator's appropriate behaviour is to exercise power, either positively or negatively, *depending upon* his judgement of whether a man has responded to his claim, given him his right, or not.

In Barrett's view, Paul does not bother to answer this charge, but goes on to refute the practical consequences of this position, which he has been charged with advocating.¹³² Käsemann, too, sees v.8 as being exclusively concerned with an objection actually made against Paul, "a new theme . . . which radically discredits the apostle's teaching."¹³³ This understanding, however, is based on these writers' view that the whole of vv.5-8 is Paul's self-defence of his preaching, vv.5-7 being presented in diatribe form. If, however, it is correct to view this passage as a unity with vv.1-4, pursuing the same purpose of establishing that God is just to judge Jews on the same basis as Gentiles, v.8 takes on a different emphasis. Far from being a separate point divorced from what precedes, though prompted by it, it takes its place in the trial as the last, devastating, and irrefutable blow directed by the defence against prosecution, proving once and for all that God is not unjust in his dealings with the Jews. Thus we agree with Cranfield, that v.8 is to be taken

to consist of a rhetorical question (expecting the answer 'No'), which serves as a rejoinder to the objection in v.7, incorporating a parenthesis which refers to the fact that some people actually allege that Paul himself teaches the attitude which he is here repudiating, and followed by a condemnation of the people to whom the parenthesis refers.¹³⁴

One could go so far as to describe this as a sarcastic response, in which Paul in effect says, 'I suppose the next thing you will be saying is that you should actively offend God by doing evil, so that he will be all the more wrathful, and so all the more demonstrate his glory and power by being even ore sever with you!' Since it is most unlikely that even the most unfaithful of Jews would advocate such an absurd and blasphemous libertinism, Paul, with this final logical step, is able to silence any further questioning of God's justice. At the same time, he is reminded that he himself, perhaps with equal sarcasm, has been slandered with the charge of advocating that very thing. Paul does not even bother to refute the

attack, but simply declares, with what may well be a curse¹³⁵, that those who say such a thing of the gospel are rightfully condemned.

3:9-18

At this stage of the argument, then, Paul has established that, while the Jews, as God's chosen people, have a definite advantage over the Gentiles, this advantage does not lie in the area of judgement, since an unfaithful Jew, far from being a true Jew, is no different from a Gentile who does not honour God. Both are guilty of ungodliness. Therefore, for God to be just, they must both be judged on the same basis. If our interpretation is correct, Paul has been particularly clever here, since, by focussing on the question of whether or not God is unjust, he has led the disobedient Jews to a conclusion about *themselves* which they cannot but accept, whereas he may well have lost their assent if he had focussed the discussion directly on their disobedience. At the same time, however, the question of God's special faithfulness to Israel, and Israel's advantage, is a legitimate one, which ought not to be ignored. At this stage, however, Paul opts to continue to deal with the question of those Jews whom God justly declares to be ungodly, contrary to their assumptions about their rights and claims because of their relationship to him in the covenant. In v.9, Paul rhetorically asks the Jews to draw their own conclusion from what he has just been saying.¹³⁶ Since his argument that the unfaithful Jew falls into the same category as the Gentiles appears to be conclusive, we take it that Paul's question here relates to all Israel, as did 3:1f. This time he answers his question before giving the evidence, taking his argument one step further, and once again taking the ground from under the feet of those who at this stage, regarding themselves as faithful Jews, were in agreement with Paul's conclusion but considered themselves to be outside it. In a final blow against any lingering assumption that any Jew, prior to the gospel, could claim to be better off than the Gentiles, Paul states that this cannot be the case, because, as he had established in 1:18ff, all men are under the power of sin¹³⁷—clear evidence of their ungodliness. Once again, Paul goes on to make his assertion irrefutable, this time by illustrating to the Jews from their own scripture, and thus independently of the gospel which they appear to have questioned, that they had all, at some time at least, been guilty of unfaithfulness. Any single

act of unfaithfulness is a turning away from justification, without which a Jew is the same as the unjustified Gentile, so that it is clear that, of himself, he is fundamentally ungodly.

The source, structure and detailed contents of the collection of quotations need not concern us here.¹³⁸ What is important is that it is ideally suited to Paul's needs because it takes up all aspects of his argument so far, more or less echoing 1:18ff, except for it being related, as scripture, specifically to the Jewish context, rather than the context of the whole creation. Seen this way, we can regard the assertion of v.10, that *no single Jew is righteous*, as a heading that is then spelled out in what follows. The lack of understanding and seeking for God (v.11) parallels 1:19-22, and presumably describes the Jew 'who is one outwardly' (2:28). Turning aside, going wrong, not doing good (v.12) parallels 1:21-23, describing here the rebellion against the covenant, and hence against the Lordship of God. vv.13-17 describe the consequent behaviour, the result of obedience to alternative Lords to which God in his wrath abandoned them, paralleling 1:26-32.¹³⁹ Finally, v.18 sums up the true nature of ungodliness, the cause of all unrighteousness¹⁴⁰, paralleling 1:21,25,28.

While this is a particularly harsh selection of Old Testament quotations, which could no doubt be countered by other texts, it is clear that such notions were familiar to the Jews, and very likely would have been accepted by those Jews who genuinely sought to be faithful even more readily than by others, since they would recognize the high esteem given to those who wrote them. Thus *Paul has proved to the Jews, by use of their own convictions and tradition, that they are all ungodly, and no different from the Gentiles, so are not entitled to make any claim, or demand any favour, when they come under the judgement of God.*¹⁴¹

3:19-20

It seems generally to be agreed that these two verses "sum up the passage and state the goal of this part of the epistle"¹⁴² and announce the "general hopelessness"¹⁴³ of the Jewish position.¹⁴⁴ Taking *ὁ νόμος* to mean the whole Old Testament, it is argued that Paul in v.19 reminds the Jews, *οἵδαμεν ὅτι*,

that the preceding quotations from the Prophets and writings are addressed to them, to whom the Old Testament is given as determinative for their lives, "the sphere of the law's validity"¹⁴⁵, so that it is indisputable that all Jews are sinful. The purpose, *ἵνα*, of demonstrating this, is to silence all claims, protestations or self-defence, the whole world, i.e., all mankind, knowing itself to be guilty, and accountable to God, when it stands on trial before him at the final judgement.

V.20 is then seen to summarise the reason for this. In v.20a, Paul quotes or echoes, Ps 143:2, adding *ἐξ ἔργων νόμου*, since this is the particular point he has been dealing with. No man can be so justified since no man is able to keep the law perfectly, as has just been shown. Käsemann¹⁴⁶ and Barrett¹⁴⁷ go so far as to suggest that even such obedience as does occur is unacceptable because it is carried out in order to win justification, to claim or even boast of attaining a right to be found righteous, rather than offering the authentic obedience which seeks to serve God's will for God's sake. This, then, would be an echo of the contrast between the outward and the inward Jew referred to in 2:28f.¹⁴⁸ Paul also differs from Ps 142:3 in that he uses *πᾶσα σὰρξ* rather than *πᾶς ὥν*, probably because it is his more usual term for humanity, but perhaps to further emphasize the weakness of mankind when it comes to obeying God's law. It is then argued that the use of *νόμος* for the *whole* Old Testament in v.19, where the reference was primarily to the preceding passage, enables Paul now to make this statement which seems to refer primarily to the law as given to Moses, though not to the exclusion of the rest of what the Old Testament has to say.

Paul's final assertion, v.20b, is thus seen to declare the total ineffectiveness of the Old Testament system of religion as far as justification is concerned, a conclusion based on, and possible only in light of the gospel revelation of the wrath of God. For example, Cranfield argues that the clause *διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας*

is added in support (*γὰρ*) of what has just been said. So far from its being true that there are men who so adequately fulfil the law's requirements as to earn justification for themselves, the truth is rather that the condition of all men is such that the primary effect of the law in relation to them is to show up their sin as sin and themselves as sinners.¹⁴⁹

This is the most that the law can hope to achieve for man. Käsemann likewise sees the provision of the law as an opportunity for man to learn through experience, rather than just theory, of the true nature of sin. He points out that this is a self-perpetuating situation.

When Judaism points to actual transgression of the law, . . . it combines it with a call to repentance which spurs to closer observance of the law. Not being able to do it is not seen here as a sign that one should not take this way . . . It simply pushes one deeper into the vicious circle of demand and effort . . . Paul's reference is not to a provisional situation but to the definitive situation. This part of the letter ends, then, with a statement of general hopelessness.¹⁵⁰

The above three paragraphs are an attempt to outline the interpretation of 3:19f generally given by commentators. We would venture to suggest, however, that an entirely different understanding, more consistent with the Old Testament, as well as Paul's overall position, and the historical situation, as we have understood these so far, might well be possible. Remembering that 3:10-18 is included by Paul as scriptural illustration or proof of a conclusion he has already stated in v.9¹⁵¹, we question the view that vv.19f are drawn directly from this passage of quotations as its conclusion.¹⁵² Rather, we would postulate that vv.19f form a separate paragraph in themselves, as a linking passage between the whole of the preceding discussion, and the opening up of the new dimension in 3:25ff. Rather than emphasizing the conclusion of v.9, it in fact *takes the conclusion and moves on from there*, leading directly towards 3:21, so that, if anything, there is a greater discontinuity between v.18 and v.19 than between v.20 and v.21.

One reason for suggesting this is the occurrence of $\delta\epsilon$ in v.19. While this can in many cases be largely disregarded, in our view it quite definitely has the force of 'but' in this instance¹⁵³, indicating that Paul is about to say something new and, in some sense contrary to, or at least in a different direction from, what immediately precedes. Thus we understand him to be saying that although he has both declared and demonstrated that all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, are ungodly, and on this basis no different from each other, what the law says is addressed only to the Jews (cf. 3:2). The significance of this is two-fold. It affirms that there is something special about the Jews that makes them unique

within mankind. At the same time, it asserts the *inappropriateness* of requiring the Gentiles to keep the law. Thus we see that in these verses Paul is again addressing the question of the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, pointing out a positive distinction to which he has, in fact, already referred, namely, that 'the Jews are entrusted with the oracles of God' (3:2). At the same time, he can be seen to be speaking to the historical situation, as we have construed it. When v.19 is understood in this way, there is no need to make the sort of manipulations, mentioned above¹⁵⁴, to account for the fact that Paul jumps straight from quotations from the writings and Prophets, to a statement about *ὁ νόμος*. The term, in both v.19 and v.20, is predominately, though not necessarily entirely, a reference to the Mosaic law.

If we are correct that Paul is, in fact, making a positive assertion about Judaism here, then it would appear that he is saying that, although possession of the law makes no difference as to the status of a man standing under God's judgement, what it has to say to those who live under it is *not pointless or without value*. On the contrary, it was given to the Jews with the divine purpose 'that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God' (v.19b). When this is understood as part of Paul's proof that the Jews are ungodly along with the Gentiles, and that the giving of the law is seen to have proof of this as its sole purpose¹⁵⁵, it is hard to see any point in the gift of the law at all, even if God could be accused of so negative a purpose. If all men were ungodly in the first place, what point could there be in separating a group off, presumably tricking them into thinking they were righteous, only to prove they were not. In what sense could such people be led to believe their chosenness was a thing for which to celebrate and to praise God, if the whole purpose were quite futile? That Käsemann asserts that this purpose was, "of course, proclaimed and known only through the apostle's preaching"¹⁵⁶, does not make the situation any less absurd. Nor does it take account of the fact that this clause occurs within a sentence, addressed to Jews, which begins with the words, 'But we know'.

In view of this, it must surely be more appropriate to understand the purpose Paul attributes to God as something positive and constructive. Far from taking action to prove the ungodliness of the Jews, by setting them an impossible task as being the only means of being righteous, *God's purpose was to make himself*

manifest, to reveal his own righteousness. There never was any sense in which the law was designed to enable man to demonstrate or attain his own righteousness. Rather, the point of keeping the law was to serve the will of God that he be known and acknowledged as was his right, in the first instance as Lord and Creator of Israel, and through that, as Lord and Creator of the whole world. His glory and power, thus revealed, would silence all voices of dissatisfaction, complaint, protest, claim, or rebellion against him¹⁵⁷ as the world, to its astonishment, no doubt, discovered that their accusations against him were not only unfounded, but actually turned back on them to accuse them. This understanding helps overcome the difficulty of interpreting *υπόδικος*. Cranfield tells us that

It is used in extra-biblical Greek to describe someone who is guilty in the sense of having offended against the law and so made himself liable to prosecution and punishment. A dative associated with it may denote either the judicial authority in relation to which one is *υπόδικος*, or—and this is more common—the injured party with a right to satisfaction.¹⁵⁸

To fit his interpretation, Cranfield opts for the former, less common, meaning. God is the judge before whom the guilty stand, silently awaiting condemnation.¹⁵⁹ According to our understanding, however, the more common usage fits better. Through the law, God is shown to be “the injured party with a right to satisfaction”. While the consequence of this is, that God, as judge, will bring to trial those who fail to give satisfaction, even though they now know God’s right to it, this is only of secondary concern here, though it is not impossible that Paul has deliberately exploited the ambiguity of the expression.

This notion that the law was given in order to reveal God’s righteousness, is supported by much of the background literature we have discussed. In Deut 6 we saw that keeping the law was an expression of reliance upon and loyalty to God, in acknowledgement of the great power he exercised in bringing his people out of slavery in Egypt.¹⁶⁰ Quell, in his discussion on the relationship between God’s righteousness and the law, indicates that the law is accepted as acknowledgement of God’s rule over all life, which is always right, and gives to man his existence, and thus is worthy of such acknowledgement.¹⁶¹

In the book of Isaiah, we are told that a nation that has turned away from God cannot claim hollow, outward keeping of the law as righteous behaviour¹⁶², presumably because they do not thereby demonstrate the acknowledgement of God's righteousness, which would have constituted righteousness for them. Rather, as we now know from the gospel (1:18ff), such behaviour constitutes ungodliness. When God decides to reverse this situation, all he requires, according to Deutero-Isaiah, is that the people accept this decision. Such acceptance may be regarded as a return to the acknowledgement of God's right over them, and so to genuine obedience to the law, made possible, we could say, only by the creative action of God in freeing them from the lesser Lords they turned to (Rom 1:18ff), and enabling them to know and honour him once more. God gives Israel righteousness by creating out of this ungodly people a nation faithful to him. Most significantly, Deutero-Isaiah stresses that he does this for his own sake, so that all men might know and give glory to him. *The purpose of Israel is to demonstrate God's righteousness to all the world.* The re-creation of Israel is the powerful outworking of God's righteousness designed to enable the whole world to give him the glory that is his right, thereby bringing about their salvation. Thus we see that the book of Isaiah provides strong support for our interpretation of Rom 3:19.¹⁶³

Further evidence occurs in the intertestamental literature.¹⁶⁴ Tobit 13:6 calls on sinners to turn to God whole-heartedly, giving thanks, blessing and exalting him, showing his strength and majesty unto nations of sinners. In the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs we found the notion that God ought to be merciful to repentant sinners, otherwise there would be no-one left to show forth his glory so that his name could be known and acknowledged. Again, in the Wisdom of Solomon, coming to know and give allegiance to God enables a man to be righteous. Such a man is obedient to the law in response to his knowledge, and hence, we assume as acknowledgement, of God's righteousness and domination. In the Qumran writings¹⁶⁵ God gives knowledge of his righteousness and glory to worthless men. In response they adhere strictly to the law. For his mercy, they 'confess to God his righteousness' and proclaim his goodness and the sin of man. Their task is to pass on the marvellous knowledge of who God is, recognizing that God chooses these men, despite their ungodliness, in order to claim the recognition, praise and glory that is his due. The Rabbinic writings discussed above¹⁶⁶ concern themselves, on the whole, more with the consequences for man,

than the purpose of God, in their debates about obedience to the law. We did, however, quote a passage arguing that God will exercise his power to achieve his purposes, even without Israel's repentance, suggesting that the aim of the law was to bring about God's purpose, which was clearly distinct from condemning Israel for failing to keep the law.¹⁶⁷

If we are correct that the emphasis in v.19 is that the law silences the world by demonstrating God's righteousness, rather than by showing all men guilty because the Jews have failed to obey the law, and so are ungodly along with the Gentiles, a new light is thrown on v.20. Far from being a new notion that contradicts the assumptions of Judaism, this verse is a continuation of the sentence begun in v.19 with the words *οἶδαμεν δὲ*.¹⁶⁸ The Jews *know* that no human being is justified by works of the law. Their whole history speaks of God taking the initiative; calling, rescuing, re-creating, a people that neither knew him nor obeyed him. He made them righteous by giving them knowledge of himself, so that, in response to this new, or renewed, awareness of his glory and his right to be acknowledged, they would seek, by keeping the law, to demonstrate to those who did not have the law their knowledge of God's righteousness. *It was not obedience to the law that constituted their righteousness, but their God-given righteousness that facilitated their obedience, for God's sake.* Turning away from God would have amounted to a rejection of his righteous claim. The keeping of the law would then be hollow and futile, since it could hardly be reckoned to demonstrate and affirm a fact which had been rejected. Thus, whether one carried out the works of the law or not was in no way a test of one's position in relation to God.

Paul's reason for asserting that the Jews *know* they are not justified by works of the law, is that through the law comes knowledge of sin. At first sight this seems to be a negative assessment of the law, as commentators point out. In light of 1:18ff, and the background material, and the argument so far, we wish to postulate that this explanation is more positive than is generally supposed. Contrary to the view that the law was intended to demonstrate to the Jews their *guilt*, we have maintained that it was given in order that *God's righteousness* might be revealed in and through his chosen people. What this clause indicates, then, is that *the law demonstrates*, though does not actually explain, *the reverse*

side of God's righteousness, his wrath, such as we know of it from 1:18ff. By making clear to the Jews, and hence the world, what his claim is, God inevitably reveals what sin is. Presumably, the law does this by indicating the sort of behaviour that is consistent with living under God's Lordship, in contrast to the sort of life one lives when under the power of sin. Just as the gospel revelation of God's righteousness simultaneously reveals his wrath, so for the Jews the law's revelation of God's righteousness simultaneously reveals sin as the product of God's wrath on those who turn away from him, though the revelation through the law is less direct than it is through the gospel. A man who is enabled to recognize sin as being contrary to God's purpose that he be righteous has the unique opportunity of abandoning service to sin in favour of service to God. Thus the law's revelation of sin is a revelation of God's righteousness which grants man the status of righteousness. In response, namely, faith, man should then turn from the lesser gods to acknowledgement of God himself. He then perpetuates the process by *proclaiming* through his keeping of the law, 'the goodness of God and the sin of men until their transgression ends'¹⁶⁹, as the Qumran writer puts it. Being justified and obeying the law are quite distinct.

In addition there is the notion that punishment can enable a man to become righteous. This is attested to in the intertestamental writings referred to in the background section. There, the understanding is that God punishes man so that he recognizes his sin, repents, receives mercy, and is granted the possibility of giving allegiance to God by obedience to the law, and is sustained in this righteousness by God.¹⁷⁰ As we put it in our discussion of the reflection of Israel's prophets during the exile, "God's righteous punishment was a startling reminder of how the relationship could and should be, and as such was a dramatic and yet gracious call for it to be re-established."¹⁷¹ Again this can be seen to be simultaneous, though indirect, revelation of righteousness and wrath.

Thus our view that the declaration, that 'through the law comes knowledge of sin', is a positive statement about the law, appears to be confirmed. We note, however, that the actual reasoning used in 1:18ff, which is specifically attributed to the gospel, that the sin itself is God's punishment, appears not to have been revealed by the law. It seems that the Jews knew of sin only in the sense of transgressions against the law, rather than regarding transgression as a manifestation

of their being under the power of sin.¹⁷² It is not specified exactly which understanding Paul had in mind when he wrote 3:20, but either way, the positiveness of the law-given knowledge of sin cannot, in our view, legitimately be denied.

This being the case we strongly reject Käsemann's assertion that v.20b is directed against Judaism and the law, as we do his claim that the Qumran recognition of human lostness within the community as well as outside it was an insight which did not come from the law.¹⁷³ The most we would say is that this aspect may have tended to be overlooked in much of wider Judaism. Besides which, such a statement is necessary only if one concludes, as Käsemann does, that 3:19f are intended to be the final stroke of condemnation of the Jews, and hence all mankind, thus concluding the preceding argument, rather than as a new section of the argument leading into what follows, as we prefer to understand it. In addition, our view, that Paul's description of the law is positive rather than condemnatory, makes it unnecessary to take the somewhat presumptuous position that the Jews did not understand their own law and religion. In particular, the view that the Jews imagined that they could earn justification by works of the law is supported neither by their writings, nor by modern scholars of Judaism.

On the other hand, because of the position he takes, Käsemann has to put into Paul's mouth a variety of meanings for νόμος:

Paul's concept of the law constitutively presupposes dialectic between the Jew as recipient of revelation and the Jew as typical representative of human piety directed to performance. The law which God has given is not simply identical with that which the Jew seeks to fulfill. When the apostle speaks of the law polemically, he has in view the *nomos* interpreted and practised by the Jew. There is thus a fluid interplay between different aspects first of the documentation of God's will in Scripture, secondly of the function of the law given to the Jew as revelation, and thirdly of the Law's inability to effect salvation.¹⁷⁴

Käsemann goes on to point out that Paul, like the Jews, recognizes works of the law as obedience to God's will, but differs from them in seeing the requirement to be "keeping and fulfilling the whole Torah as a never-ending service."¹⁷⁵ Thus, Käsemann maintains that v.20a, by asserting that no man is justified by works

of the law, shows that serving the law and serving Christ stand in antithesis, to the point of being mutually exclusive, which can be the case because "Paul does not see authentic obedience realized in the works of the law."¹⁷⁶ While there is nothing substantially incorrect in those statements, surely Käsemann has missed the point altogether, further confusing the issue by prematurely making assertions about the service of Christ.

Käsemann's position is to be rejected on the basis that Paul's discussion of the law up to 3:18 was not concerned with the question of justification, but with showing that all Jews, like the Gentiles, are of themselves fundamentally ungodly, and therefore subject to judgement on the same basis as the Gentiles. But, according to our understanding, the fact that the Jews had been given the oracles of God indicates that they had been justified. As we saw in our chapter on 'the God who brings into existence that which does not exist', the call or election of Israel amounted to the creation of a nation in communion with God. In the terms of this chapter, we can say that God established, from amongst the world of ungodly men, a nation in relationship to him. By Paul's definition of ungodliness as not knowing God, Israel must have been justified in order to know God. Keeping the law is then no more than the behaviour appropriate to the relationship already established, and in no sense involved in the act of justification itself. While turning one's back on the law amounts to a rejection of justification, the keeping of the law does not bring about justification but occurs within its context. If, further, we were to join Käsemann in anticipating what is to come, we would also suggest that serving Christ has nothing to do with justification, but is the appropriate behaviour within the relationship established by the justifying death and resurrection of Christ. Therefore we see no basis in this aspect of the difference between traditional Judaism and Christianity for saying that the two are mutually exclusive.¹⁷⁷ Only further examination of Paul's argument can determine whether or to what extent the two do stand in opposition to each other.

3:21-26

So far, Paul has spelled out the gospel revelation of the wrath of God and of his impartiality in judgement in 1:18-2:29; in 3:1-20 he followed that with a demonstration that, although a full understanding of these had not been revealed to the Jews, they were entirely consistent with Judaism, and in no sense a denigration of God's faithfulness to Israel, or of the very real significance of the Jewish nation in the outworking of God's purpose. He now takes up the question of what in the gospel *is* new and different from Judaism. In so doing he echoes the language of 1:18, moving into a discussion of what we might call the positive side of the gospel revelation of God's righteousness, in contrast to the revelation of its more negative reverse side, wrath.

Chapter 4

The God who Raises the Dead

4.1 The Concept in some Background Literature

As with the other conceptions of the God in whom, according to Romans 4, Abraham believed, we begin our study with a survey of pre-Pauline literature, in order to have some picture of how the concept of God, as him who raises the dead, might have been known and understood by Paul and/or his contemporaries.

4.1.1 The Old Testament

Life and Death in Classical Judaism

As far as the earlier parts of the Old Testament are concerned, scholars are unanimous in stating that a belief that God raised the dead simply did not exist in pre-exilic Judaism. It would seem that the very earliest Israelites, like all primitive peoples, assumed that life continued after death, and that those who died needed food and implements for their journey to the underworld.¹ By the time of the early occupation of Palestine, however, such specific notions no longer pertained, though the assumption that the dead continued to exist in some form was not actually abandoned. Frost² explains that the phrases 'was gathered to his people' (Gen 25:8) and 'slept with his fathers' (2 Kings 14:29)³, and the story of the Witch of Endor (1 Sam 28:3f), are

redolent of a belief in the continuing existence of the dead, even though such phrases occur in an age in which they have become a *clichè*, the original significance of which has been long forgotten.⁴

Eichrodt⁵ points out that the notion of being reunited with one's fathers is associated with the idea that the grave, especially a family grave, is sometimes spoken of as the dwelling place of the dead.⁶

This oldest form of belief in survival after death exists side by side with the more widely attested⁷ belief that the assumed continuing existence of the dead took place in *shē'ol* (שְׁאוֹל). This notion, which appears to date from the early 8th century B.C., is strictly incompatible with the older view, but there is no evidence that this presented a problem, or demanded attempts at harmonization.⁸ That *shē'ol* is also perceived of as being underground is demonstrated by the frequent references to 'going down to' or being 'raised up from' *shē'ol*.⁹ The exact origin of this picture is not certain, and the etymology of the word is obscure¹⁰, but there does seem to be some consensus on the idea that it is based on a Babylonian view of the dwelling-place of the dead, modified in order to be consistent with Yahwism:

It is probable, indeed, that behind the conception of *shē'ol* lay the Babylonian Arallû, which Jastrow describes as 'the great cave underneath the earth in which the dead were supposed to dwell.'¹¹

Some indication of the imagined nature of *shē'ol* is further conveyed by the alternative names or synonyms used. Probably the most common is 'pit' (*bôr*, and less frequently, *shachath*)¹². Others are 'the darkness'¹³, 'silence'¹⁴, 'land of oblivion'¹⁵. 'Abaddon', meaning 'place of destruction'¹⁶ also occurs occasionally as a poetic synonym.¹⁷

Ideas of the sort of existence led in *shē'ol* by the dead—the *rēphā'im*¹⁸, or Shades—"were negative and vague."¹⁹ Both the Old Testament evidence, and scholarly interpretations of it, vary considerably. Nevertheless, it is clear that this existence was radically different from life on earth: a shadowy, non-corporal, impotent survival, with all familiar possibilities of life being withdrawn with the

departure of the animating power of life, *rūah*, and the consequent "loss of every vital sign"²⁰, which marked the point of death. This meant there was assumed to be no activity, no meaningful distinctions between men, ignorance of life on earth, no community or reunion with loved ones, perhaps even endless misery. Only the most unhappy and hopeless circumstances of life could make a Jew desire to enter into this dreary, ineffectual existence that was non-existence.²¹ To the living, so wishy-washy a world must have seemed as undesirable and inadequate as the writer of Revelation found the Laodiceans to be (Rev 3:15f), or as Lucy finds Charlie Brown to be.²²

Despite this, it was simply accepted that all men would, in due time, go to *sh'e'ol*²³, and that none would return.²⁴ The fact of mortality was taken for granted, as statements such as 'you are dust, and to dust you shall return' (Gen 3:19) and 'The years of our life come to an end like a sigh. The years of our life are threescore and ten . . .' (Ps 90:9f) testify. To die graciously at a good old age was considered a blessing. Consequently a premature or violent death, which cut life short, was the only admissible reason for anxiety about death. Otherwise it was a matter of practical acceptance that "life was . . . limited, meted out to man"²⁵ according to the will of God and in recognition of his freedom both in giving life and in taking it away.

[In] face of its reality Israel displayed an obedience unrivalled in the history of religion . . . Israel did not know death as in any way an independent mythical power—death's power was at bottom the power of Jahweh himself. Death was no last enemy, but Jahweh's acting on men.²⁶

This attitude meant that neither life nor faith were seen to be called into question by death.²⁷ Further, it fundamentally excluded interest in the dead. Presumably this accounts for the almost complete silence in the Pentateuch on the subject of death. It seems unlikely that this reflects the attitude of ordinary people, especially since they could not help but be aware of the beliefs and practices of neighbouring nations.²⁸ This invites the postulation that there was a deliberate effort made by the religious leaders to minimise reflection about death and the after-life. Frost is of the opinion that this was indeed the case. In suggesting that this silence is deliberate, he says, "This is no mere *argumentum e silentio*

but a veritable *silentii conspiratio*.”²⁹ The view of von Rad, quoted above, that Israel’s acceptance of death constituted unrivalled obedience, can be seen to be consistent with this view, since it implies an attitude and faith contrary to the natural inclinations of men.

Whether or not this speculation has any truth to it, “The unimportance of the dead for the normal life of the Israelite is an incontrovertible fact”.³⁰ Frost interprets this as follows:

[The] attitude was quite clearly that since Yahwism did not include any teaching on the subject and since all burial practices and mourning customs were associated with pagan cults, the true worshipper of Yahweh kept himself aloof from these things and reckoned the dead to be dead—i.e. cut off from life, from kindred on earth, and from Yahweh. “The Mosaic religion sealed up the door of Sheol hermetically.”³¹

On the other hand, with his emphasis on the centrality of the covenant throughout Old Testament theology, Eichrodt is able to offer a much more positive basis for the Israelites’ relatively disinterested attitude towards death:

In Israel . . . it was the shattering experience of God’s will to rule which shut the gates of the kingdom of the dead, and proscribed any dealings with the departed. Yahweh’s claim to exclusive Lordship covered not only alien gods but also those subterranean powers which might offer their help to men. In this way his sovereignty was deliberately concentrated on this world; it was on this earth that God’s kingdom was to be set up. The direction of all his forces to this end gave a man’s life its whole context and value. Hence Yahweh claimed the living for himself, and united them to his people; the dead had no further relationship with him.³²

In light of this, while Frost, possibly viewing the situation too much from a Christian point of view, can only see the Jewish belief in *sh’ol* as “an act of spiritual self-denial which cost them misery at every grave-side, and denied them consolation on the death-bed itself” simply for the sake of loyalty to Yahweh³³, others are able to present a much more positive view. Far from being some sort of noble pig-headedness, as Frost seems to imply, the Israelites’ loyalty to

Yahweh was firmly based on thanksgiving for their election and commitment to the covenant, of which the key factor was the promise of the preservation of the nation. The resulting confidence in Yahweh made acceptance of his will much more reasonable than it seems to us today. If Yahweh controlled death, why should it be feared or resented? Besides, the attitude and cultic teaching of the community conditioned one's expectations from the earliest age. More importantly, the nature of the covenant meant that the whole orientation of the people was towards the nation, and its preservation in history. This took precedence over the individual to the point that an individual was recognized only as an embodiment of the community. Consequently, continuing participation in the community through one's children and by being remembered for one's positive contribution to society took priority over questions of personal mortality. To die childless, or prematurely, was thus of far greater concern than was death itself, in that it limited one's ongoing participation in the life of the nation.³⁴ That this situation was found to be quite satisfactory is surely evidenced by its remarkably long and widespread continuance, to which Frost himself points.³⁵ It was probably primarily with the post-exilic growth of individualism that this approach became unsatisfactory. Then change *did* come.

The preceding quotations from Frost and Eichrodt both end with a reference to an aspect of belief concerning the existence of the *r^ephā'im* not yet mentioned in our discussion. *The most decisive and devastating declaration about the dead is that in sh^e'ol they are cut off from God.* This is not necessarily to say that God had no power over the inhabitants of *sh^e'ol*, or was ignorant of them.³⁶ Nor is there any sense that *sh^e'ol* was ruled over by gods of the Underworld, as the Babylonians believed.³⁷ Rather, the nature of this isolation is in the realm of direct encounter and involvement with Yahweh, as Psalm 88 illustrates³⁸:

³For my soul is full of troubles,
and my life draws near to Sheol.

⁴I am reckoned among those who go down to the Pit;
I am a man who has no strength,

⁵like one forsaken among the dead,
like the slain that lie in the grave,
like those whom thou dost remember no more,
for they are cut off from thy hand.

⁶Thou hast put me in the depths of the Pit,

- in the regions dark and deep.
- ⁷Thy wrath lies heavy upon me,
and thou dost overwhelm me with all thy waves.
- ⁸Thou hast caused my companions to shun me;
thou hast made me a thing of horror to them.
- I am shut in so that I cannot escape;
⁹my eye grows dim through sorrow.
- Every day I call upon thee, O Lord;
I spread out my hands to thee.
- ¹⁰Dost thou work wonders for the dead?
Do the shades rise up to praise thee?
- ¹¹Is thy steadfast love declared in the grave,
or thy faithfulness in Abaddon?
- ¹²Are thy wonders known in the darkness,
or thy saving help in the land of forgetfulness?

This psalm indicates the two ways in which the dead are cut off from God. On the one side, the dead are beyond the realm of God's providence, wondrous works, and salvation—those things which constituted God's side of the covenant relationship, the essential life preserving and enhancing divine action and faithfulness that Israel depended on for survival and fullness of life (vv.5,10-12). On the other side, and consequent to being severed from this divine action, the dead do not give praise to God (vv.10,12) or proclaim his greatness (v.11), thereby calling others to praise. The conviction that this was an essential part of what God desired from his people is conveyed particularly clearly in Is 38:17-20, where the writer believes he has been saved from a death sentence for his sins, in order that he may continue to worship³⁹:

- ¹⁷Lo, it was for my welfare
that I had great bitterness;
but thou hast held back my life
from the pit of destruction,
for thou hast cast all my sins
behind my back.
- ¹⁸For Sheol cannot thank thee,
death cannot praise thee;
those who go down to the pit cannot hope
for thy faithfulness.
- ¹⁹The living, the living, he thanks thee,
as I do this day;

the father makes known to the children
thy faithfulness.

²⁰The Lord will save me,
and we will sing to stringed instruments
all the days of our life,
at the house of the Lord.

From v.20 it is apparent that the praise specifically in mind is the public worship of the cult, for which, according to 1 Chron 16:4⁴⁰, a particular section of the Levites were given special responsibility:

Moreover he appointed certain of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the Lord, to invoke, to thank, and to praise the Lord, the God of Israel.

Is 38:18 makes reference to each of these three functions, invoking the Lord being indirectly eliminated by the fact that, since the dead cannot hope for God's faithfulness, there was no point in invoking him. From this it can be concluded that the second aspect of being cut off from God is that the dead could have no part in the cultic worship, the formal affirmation of one's involvement in the covenant. As non-participants, then, the dead were not only denied the opportunity of the dynamic interchanges which marked Israel's relationship with Yahweh, but were also cut off from those still living, since they were outside the cult: "Looked at from the world of the living, whose centre and source was the cult, they were in a state of extreme and irreparable uncleanness."⁴¹ In sum, their ongoing existence was empty of anything that could be regarded as meaningful in the Israelite *anschauung*, and so could in no sense be spoken of as *life* after death : "The underworld had no relationship with God. That is not a metaphysical but it is a religious denial of immortality. Man continues to exist after death, but without religion."⁴²

From what we have seen thus far, it is clear that the early Israelites had no perception of God as him who raises the dead, at least not in the sense that is meant when Paul speaks of believing 'in him that raised from the dead Jesus

our Lord' (Rom 4:24). Nevertheless, our study has not been futile, since we surmise it to be highly likely that Paul held a similar view of the dead as has been outlined. Thus, when he spoke of a person being raised from the dead, it would appear that the point was not that the person had utterly ceased to exist, and literally and wholly turned to dust, and was then miraculously reconstituted. Rather, one whose life had become mere survival, in total isolation from God, was once more brought into relationship with him, and consequently also became available for relationships with men again, though presumably still in the form of a 'shade' rather than with the flesh and bones of those living on earth. Thus, just as we found the notion of the divine-human relationship to be central in our studies of Jewish ideas of creation and justification, it would appear that here the stage is set for any notion of resurrection to be fundamentally defined in terms of relationship with God.

Further insight into the Hebrew way of thinking, and hence, presumably, Paul's, is to be gained by looking at the converse of this picture we have outlined of the dead being cut off from God. If the dead are distinguished from the living most decisively by their being severed from participation in cultic worship and the covenant, then the obvious deduction from this is that it was this participation which was decisive for the living. It could even be said that *by definition* the living were those who praised and thanked and invoked Yahweh, relying on his providence and faithfulness. But this was a development of an earlier, more fundamental understanding.

The Israelites, like other Ancient Near Eastern nations, in the first instance understood that they were *living* because they had *life*—an entity which was seen not as a part of man himself, but as something which came to him and, at death, departed from him.⁴³ Their life was given them by God, as the Gen 2 creation account illustrates: 'the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being' (v.7). Conversely, this breath, or spirit of God, *rūah*, returned to God when the living died: 'and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it' (Eccles 12:7). "Thus *rūah* is at all times plainly superior to Man, a divine power within his mortal body, subject to the rule of God alone"⁴⁴, as Ps 104:29f, as part of a hymn praising God for all his mighty

works, demonstrates:

²⁹When thou hidest thy face, they are dismayed;
when thou takest away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.

³⁰When thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created;
and thou renewest the face of the ground.

Thus it is made clear that a living creature is not simply created and set on its way. The "absolute divine authority over the spirit of life [is] a demonstration that at every moment the creature was dependent upon the Creator."⁴⁵

This corresponds with our findings in Chapter 2, that the Israelite understanding of creation developed as a reading back to the beginning of the nation's historical experience of dependence on God, and that, conversely, God's activity in history could be regarded as creative activity.⁴⁶ If then, the ups and downs in the nation's history, could be seen as due to influxes or withdrawals of God's creative activity, then they could equally be regarded as influxes or withdrawals of God's life-giving breath⁴⁷, so that the words 'life' and 'death', or metaphors for these, could be used to represent these ups and downs. (Hereafter these words used in this sense are written in a different typescript: *life*, *death*). The same could be said for the ups and downs of the individual as participant in the national life, especially with the post-exilic growth in individualism. This means that all sorts of misfortune, weakness, illness or handicap, despair, non-participation in the community life, danger, persecution or oppression at the hands of enemies could be referred to as death.⁴⁸ Conversely, good fortune, strength, and, as we noted at the introduction to this part of the discussion (p.7 above), participation in the cultic community, were seen as *life* in this full sense of the word. Rescue, defeat of enemies, renewal, or a return of health were then regarded as being brought from *death* to *life*. An example of this terminology being applied to the nation is Is 9:2-4, a prophecy, phrased in the past tense, promising release from captivity and oppression. The people are said to have been in darkness— a synonym for *shē'ol*.⁴⁹ The opposite—light—therefore refers to *life*⁵⁰:

²The people who walked in darkness

have seen a great light;
 those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
 on them has light shined.
³Thou hast multiplied the nation,
 thou hast increased its joy;
 they rejoice before thee
 as with joy at the harvest,
 as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
⁴ For the yoke of his burden,
 and the staff for his shoulder,
 the rod of his oppressor,
 thou hast broken as on the day of Mid'ian.

In addition to the release from oppression, building up of the nation, and life of joy, the bestowing of *life* ('on them has light shined') also brings strong government, peace, justice and righteousness. In contrast, the Assyrian oppressors do not seek help from Yahweh, the source of life, but for help through the usual channels of *their* religion, which is shown to be utterly futile, since no life is to be found by this means⁵¹, so that their resulting despair takes them to the realms of *death*, again spoken of as darkness:

And when they say to you, "Consult the mediums and the wizards who chirp and mutter", should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the teaching and to the testimony. Surely for this word which they speak there is no dawn. They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry; and when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will curse their king and their God, and turn their faces upward; and they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be thrust into thick darkness. (Is 8:19-22)

This understanding of a less than satisfactory state in life amounting to an approach, or entry into the realm⁵² of *death*, and *vice versa*, is a common notion in the Psalms of thanksgiving and lament. An example of the numerous passages of this type is Ps 88, quoted in part on p.5 above. That this confirms our suggestion that the most distinctive aspect of death is to be cut off from God, is that the frequent call to God for help, from one in danger or despair or ill health, is phrased in terms of God having become inaccessible to the sufferer, so that relationship with him is believed to be disrupted.

How long, O Lord? Wilt thou forget me for ever?
 How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? (Ps 13:1)
 Why dost thou stand afar off, O Lord?
 Why dost thou hide thyself in times of trouble? (Ps 10:1)

It could be said that the above constitutes a *metaphorical* use of the terms life and death.⁵³ In light of the foregoing discussion, in particular of the position of being cut off from God which is undoubtedly an experience in earthly life as well as an assumption about death, it is much more appropriate to conclude, as does von Rad on the basis of Barth's study, "that Israel held a very highly comprehensive and complex concept of [death] not at all easy to define."⁵⁴ He spells this out as follows:

Without any doubt Israel understood death, like righteousness, as something spatial, as a 'realm', as the fact makes clear that, for example, she practically identified the wilderness with death and Sheol, or could at any rate attribute to it predicates belonging to death. Thus the difference between life and death was not in any sense based on a simple diagnosis of natural science. Taken exactly, the definition of what death is and means is not a matter of mere neutral empirical fact; it was not established once and for all on the basis of a definition common to all humanity. Rather, it was Jahweh who apportioned death for men. And what death was and was not, Israel came ever and again to learn anew from Jahweh. *When she talks, in her cultic utterances at least, of death, she speaks not of a physical reality, but in the main of experiences of faith.* For that is what the laments and thanksgivings in the Psalter imply—death begins to become a reality at the point where Jahweh forsakes a man, where he is silent, i.e., at whatever point the life-relationship with Jahweh wears thin. From there it is only a step till the final cessation of life, till the moment at which the *נֶפֶשׁ* is separated from the body.⁵⁵ (Our emphasis)

As von Rad points out⁵⁶, this is an understanding of death that is strange for the 20th century way of thinking. We suggest, however, that though it may indeed be difficult for a modern, scientifically orientated mind, for a child it may not be nearly so difficult. An imaginative child can create a whole world of her own, in which all her favourite toys are animated, and have their own unique characters and relationships. The child rules over this world and all that happens in it,

knowing herself to be both intimately and irreplaceably involved, and yet at the same time distinct from it. A toy that falls out of favour and is discarded to the shelf or under the bed, is excluded from the 'game', so is as good as dead, although to the outside observer it is still the toy it was. Another child may play with the same toys, so that they actually carry out their function as toys, but only under the love and direction of the owner do they have the distinctive life which she grants to them, and which operates only while the toy is actually involved in the world and life she creates for it. In most cases, only a selection of her toys will be thus privileged, though it remains the case that all are in fact hers, and so have the potential to be included as part of her living world, should they win her favour.⁵⁷ Similarly, a child may create such a world simply out of objects or events around her, so that they take on a quality of life that is entirely determined by the child, and quite different from that attributed by the 'objective' adult observer.⁵⁸ This is not, of course, to suggest that people are simply toys in the hands of God (anymore than the toys are 'mere toys' to *their* owner) but it is an attempt to illustrate how a living being, paralleled by a toy, may be either *dead* or *alive*, depending on his relationship to his creator/owner.

This idea that living human beings may be spoken of as *alive* or *dead* according to whether or not they stand in satisfactory cultic relationships with God, or feel themselves to be cut off from God, has relevance for our understanding of Paul's teaching on resurrection. While it is quite clear that the Psalmists go only so far as to regard themselves to be on the brink of death, or to feel themselves as good as dead, when they plead for rescue, or give thanks for it, they understand their rescue to have been facilitated by the spirit of God. They are made *alive* again because they receive a 'dose' of life, of *rūah*, from God.⁵⁹ While this is not regarded as resurrection as such, if there had been a belief that the dead *could* be raised from *shē'ol*, one could conjecture that the psalmists might have gone so far as to speak of themselves as *actually* dead. Speculation apart, it is certainly the case that Paul, presumably with the confidence engendered by belief that Jesus *had been raised* after being *physically* dead, could also speak of living people who were not in appropriate relationship with God as being *dead*. He too attributes *life* in the proper sense to be life which is *and continues to be* given by the spirit of God. This is specifically stated in Rom 8:6-12⁶⁰:

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.

On the basis of this, we conclude that the aspect of Paul's thought that is described as 'realised' eschatology, the 'already' of resurrection life, has its roots in this fundamental Israelite perception of *life* and *death*. In this sense we can say that although the evidence indicates a complete absence of the idea of resurrection in classical Judaism, the foundation is laid for a belief that God is he who raises the dead, so long as due recognition is given to the complex and comprehensive understanding of death outlined above. On this level, then, the parallelism Käsemann highlights between God as creator and as raiser of the dead is here strongly affirmed.

We return now to the work of God's spirit as depicted in Ps 104:29f (p.9 above), in order to explore further the Israelite understanding of life and death as it is defined in relationship to God and the cult of the covenant. The psalm refers to God creating by sending forth his spirit, his life-giving breath. In Chapter 2, we argued that the dominant Old Testament understanding of creation was that God created by his word.⁶¹ In Ps 33:6 these two ideas are specifically brought into association: 'By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth.' From this, Eichrodt concludes, "It is, therefore, as the possessor of the spirit of life that God utters the creative word."⁶² Just as Deutero-Isaiah declared that, as creator, Yahweh has a right to Lordship, so also, as possessor of the spirit of life, the living God⁶³, is Lord over all life and death.⁶⁴ Thus *life* depends on acknowledging him by making oneself loyal to him and subject to his requirements:

You shall be careful to do therefore as the Lord your God commanded

you, that you may live, and that it may go well, and that you may live in the land which you shall possess. (Dt 5:32)

those who turn away from thee shall be written in the earth, for they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living water. (Jer 17:13b)

It is on this basis that the connection between life and the cult, including keeping the Torah, is established.

Since the creative word of God, the breath of his lips, is directly linked with his breath of life, his word addressed to Israel is a word of *life* or *death*, depending on whether it is accepted and obeyed, or rejected. Thus it becomes clear that the granting and withdrawing of life is neither arbitrary nor capricious, but is man's own choice or decision:

See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you this day, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live (Dt 30:15-19).⁶⁵

This parallels our discussion of the story of the 'fall' in Gen 2-3⁶⁶, where, according to Westermann, death was the punishment to mankind for saying "No" to God's command. We earlier observed⁶⁷ that the punishment was *not* death, as had been threatened, but only alienation from God. On the basis of the understanding of death we now know the Israelites to have had, it is apparent that the punishment was indeed death—Adam was cut off from God and so set in the realm of death, on the inexorable path to cessation of life.⁶⁸ This narrative, then, proposes that, even before the election of Israel and the establishment of

the cult, the fundamental pattern of relationship was as the cult indicated, albeit on a somewhat simpler level, there having been ^{only} the one command at that point.⁶⁹ Eichrodt argues that it was this notion that caused death to be lamented, when in the earliest period it had been much more a matter of "tranquil submission"⁷⁰, for the pious at least. He spells this out in the following way:

By seeing the delivering up of human life to the hostile forces of death as the result of a divine sentence stemming from mankind's decisive turning away from God, in which we all share, the Yahwist narrator gives the doom of death for the first time its full bitterness. Responsibility for the disruption of fellowship with God by death now falls back upon Man. It is he himself who by the consciously affirmed, anti-God quality of his own nature has incurred that fundamental disturbance of his whole existence which leaves him prey to life's suffering, and separates him from God.⁷¹

Countering this distressing view of death, however, was the confidence which the Israelites had in God's faithfulness to his covenant promise to preserve the nation. This opened the way to the possibility of new beginnings after lapses in loyalty, and at the same time highlighted the real value of God's mercy offered through the covenant, and engendered an attitude of humility towards death. This confidence consistently took precedence over genuine recognition of the counter-promise that disloyalty would bring destruction: "At no point does the Old Testament close the immense gap which divides their proclamation of future judgement from the assurances of redemption expressed in the cultus."⁷² The role of the cult is, in fact, absolutely central, not only in facilitating the continuance of hope, but also in shaping the sort of attitude that has so often been interpreted as self-righteousness or a belief in justification by works. Since it was through the cult that the life-determining word of Yahweh was proclaimed, it was also within the cult that response to it was made. The proclamation of Dt 30:15-20, or its equivalent, was a part of cultic worship, in effect taking the people back to the position of the nation prior to their entry to the promised land, even though they had long since physically entered it. The participants were addressed, according to von Rad,

not as those who already have life, but as those who have joined in

the cultus or have come to hear the commandments of God, at the very moment when the decision between life and death is to be made . . . The ultimate decision between life and death was thus for Israel a cultic matter, and only within the cultus did the individual receive assurance that he would have life.⁷³

This meant that the affirmative response was given according to a formalized structure determined by the cult. Since the cult presupposed the covenant this response was not given conditional status, but was rather a re-affirmation of loyalty, in recognition of the need for salvation and justification. Thus it took the form of a declaration of righteousness, irrespective of actual past behaviour. In so far as this constituted repentance, it was forward-looking repentance. Loyalty and turning back to God were alike declared as formal, positive, representative statements of righteousness, along the lines of Deut 26 or Ezek 18, or even the unattainably excessive claims of Job 31; Ps 1; 119. As von Rad points out,

It is a noteworthy feature of any and every complaint and request that the worshipper's right relationship with God, so far as it concerns him subjectively, is never placed in doubt by so much as a hint of his imperfection or unworthiness. The worshipper always represents himself as one who lives *wholly* with God, who has put his whole trust in him and has obeyed him implicitly.⁷⁴

This being the case, it is important for the understanding of Judaism as it is presented in Romans, that the Jew's depiction of himself as righteous be recognized, at least in origin, as a cultic description, and not self-righteousness. In addition, his claim to performance of particular expressions of righteousness should not be regarded as a legalistic claim on God, but as a claim based on loyalty, and thus fundamentally a claim to justification by one who in fact knows himself to be ungodly, on the basis of faith, as it *ought* to be expressed in obedience to the law's requirements. It is not a claim for reward, but an expression of loyalty to the living God, the source of life, and simultaneously a rejection of loyalty to other gods, and hence death (Dt 30:17f). If criticism is to be directed at this system, it should not be at the Jew himself who attributes righteousness to himself, but at the cult which takes on itself the right to pronounce life and death, a role which is uniquely God's. In other words, the cult could be accused of having overstepped

its rightful limits, to the extent that von Rad speaks of the "usurpation of authority over the saving relationship on the part of the *cultus*."⁷⁵ It would appear that the priesthood had, in time, become sufficiently powerful to imagine that it was the cult itself, rather than the *actual* commands of God, that were the focus of choice between life and death. In this respect, Psalm 50 raises a lone voice of objection:

¹⁶But to the wicked God says:

 "What right have you to recite my statutes,
 or take my covenant on your lips?

¹⁷For you hate discipline,
 and you cast my words behind you.

¹⁸These things you have done and I have kept silent;
 you thought that I was one like yourself.

 But now I rebuke you, and lay the charge before you.

²³He who brings thanksgiving as his sacrifice honours me;
 to him who orders his way aright
 I will show the salvation of God!"

This psalm is, however, far outnumbered by those which claim life from God on the basis of their life-long righteous loyalty.

In the course of this discussion we have moved a long way from the point of defining the Hebrew perception of death as a prelude to understanding what it might mean to speak of God as him who raises the dead. Nevertheless, the picture of God as source of life, and so Lord over life and death, has enabled us to postulate that the Old Testament has laid the foundation for a belief in some degree of 'realised' eschatology as spirit directed *life* in the midst of a non-spirit directed world of *death*. We have also shown that the law is seen as *life* or *death* determining, depending on one's acceptance or rejection of it as an expression of loyalty to God. Within the cult, the choice of *life* through the affirmation of loyalty, is expressed as a declaration of righteousness which ignores the past and looks to the future. Clearly, this declaration amounts to a claim to be justified made by one whose past behaviour would almost certainly have included unrighteousness, so that this cultic declaration can be seen as being based on a

belief that God justifies the ungodly, thereby bringing them from *death* to *life*. This understanding, as has been indicated, is based on the association of God's spirit as creative word, and thence as word to Israel communicated through the cult, with the understanding of this spirit as the source of life. Hence we can claim to have an inseparable association of the ideas of creation, justification and the giving of life which, once the idea of resurrection reaches its full development, will give incontrovertible support to Käsemann's understanding of these themes as parallel, or we might say synonymous.

Other points particularly relevant to Käsemann's exposition of Romans, are the notions of Lordship, and God's claim on man which demands response expressed in obedience, and the emphasis on life as a gift. With respect to Lordship, we find in Dt 30:15-20 the implication that the choice for or against God is in fact a choice between God and other gods, or, according to Ezek 18, between God and idols, which appears to confirm Käsemann's contention that man is always under Lordship of one god or another. The emphasis that life is a gift, and that life is only available to those in fellowship with God could well be expressed in terms of Käsemann's conviction that the gift is inseparable from the Giver,⁷⁶ so that Käsemann's assertion about the nature of righteousness is shown to be equally applicable to the nature of life. Our findings so far are concisely summed up in a passage from Eichrodt. In quoting this, we draw attention to the remarkable similarity between this and the themes which frequently crop up in Käsemann's writing. We regard this as affirmation that Paul's theology is fundamentally rooted in Judaism, and that Käsemann's picture of this religion as very much opposed to Pauline Christianity is misguided. In summary of the foregoing, then, we present Eichrodt's outline of God as the living Lord, the giver of life:

Yahweh reveals himself as the one who is free, who has control over the life of his worshippers, and from whom no one imagines that he can wrest the secret of life . . . Yahweh's unrestricted Lordship, by virtue of which he as the only possessor of the spirit of life holds sway over the existence of his creatures, acquires its distinctive character from the relationship which he has established between himself and the people of his choice. That life is a gift bestowed by God, over which Man cannot of his own resources exercise control, is a truth sealed by the fact that life is called to God's service, and obliged to take its constant orientation from his will. Life is only rightly understood as

God's gift when it becomes Man's answer to God's call. But it is at this very moment that it also becomes full of promise.⁷⁷

Deutero-Isaiah

We have already demonstrated that Deutero-Isaiah prophesied the release of the Israelites in captive exile in Babylon as divine salvation that could be described as creation out of nothing or as justification of the ungodly. Although it is perhaps unwise to speak here of the raising of the dead, since in normal usage this has the connotation of resurrection following the expiration of earthly life, on the basis of the more comprehensive understanding of life and death presented above, it can readily be demonstrated that Deutero-Isaiah also used the notion of God giving *life* to the *dead* to describe the anticipated salvation. Although the words 'death' and 'life' scarcely occur, the writing abounds with images and metaphors that are synonymous with these words.

We have pointed out above that the most distinctive feature of death is that the dead are *cut off from God*, unknown or forgotten by him. In challenging the nation's loss of faith in their God's ability or willingness to save them, Deutero-Isaiah indicates that the people believed themselves to be thus cut off:

Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
"My way is hid from the Lord,
and my right is disregarded by my God?" (Is 40:27)⁷⁸

They therefore made this the case by cutting themselves off, abandoning their cultic worship;

"Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob;
but you have been weary of me, O Israel.
You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offerings
or honoured me with your sacrifices." (43:22f)

and God temporarily responded accordingly, being "wearied with [their] iniquities" (43:24);

For a brief moment I forsook you,
but with great compassion I will gather you.
In overflowing wrath for a moment
I hid my face from you (54:7f),
so that they were indeed "far from deliverance". (46:12)

In such a position, the nation could certainly be said to be *dead*. In this respect Deutero-Isaiah goes further than the psalmists, who dared speak only of being *near* to death, of feeling *as if* they were cut off like the dead. Thus his message of salvation speaks of a reversal of this isolation from God, a bringing back to *life* of the *dead*, or at least an invitation to return to *life* through God making himself accessible once more. His return is proclaimed as an entry into the realm of *death*, for which wilderness and desert are synonymous:

In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God (40:3)

"Let [the people] approach" (41:1), "I bring near my deliverance, it is not far off" (46:13), he says. "Fear not, for I am with you" (41:10). Just as he *was* active as their God "when there was no strange god [amongst them]", so from now on he is their God again (43:12f), as their descendants will proclaim (44:5). Likewise other nations will say, "God is with you only, and there is no other, no god besides him" (45:14). So he says "Turn to me and be saved" (45:22), "Hearken to me, you who pursue deliverance, you who seek the Lord" (51:1), "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near . . . return to the Lord" (55:6f). This life-giving reunion with God is to be greeted with praise and thanksgiving (52:8), the celebration and sign of the *living*, in contrast to the *dead*, and is accompanied by the promise that *death* shall never again rule the nation since the people shall never again be cut off from their God (48:19; 55:13).

Yahweh is the unique source of *life*, and the only immortal one⁷⁹ whose word is life to his people (55:3,11), while other gods or idols cannot give life, since

they themselves have no life and cannot even move, let alone deliver⁸⁰. This is another way in which the prophet assures his people of deliverance, again implying that the concept of deliverance, redemption and salvation can equally be rendered by that of the *dead* being given *life*. In contrast, and consistent with Deut 30:17f, those who worship idols will be punished with death.⁸¹ This destruction of their idol worshipping captors gives *life* to Israel (41:12; 43:4) both in that she is thereby physically freed from captivity and in that it is conclusively demonstrated that idols and other gods are a mere delusion, there being no other god beside the living God.⁸²

Another way in which Deutero-Isaiah makes it clear that God will bring them and all nations, from *death* to *life*, is by using metaphor pairs to describe the change that is to take place. Darkness will be turned to light (42:16); the eyes of the blind will be opened and the deaf will hear (42:7,18; 43:8); those imprisoned in the darkness of *sh'ol* shall be set free⁸³; water will flow in the desert, food will appear in the wilderness, and trees will be planted as evidence that for Israel life has overcome death for all time⁸⁴; the weak and weary will be given help and strength⁸⁵; his people will be fed and sustained, carried, comforted, given peace⁸⁶; and the depleted nation will continue and expand⁸⁷, a sure sign of *life* in the fullest sense of the word. Further evidence that the prophesied rescue can be regarded as God giving *life* to the *dead* lies in the reminder of past events which were already regarded as having been made possible by the gift of God's life-giving spirit, for example, the calling of Abraham, the creation of the nation, the rescue at the Red Sea. In fact it is specifically stated that it is by the gift of God's spirit that the servant who is to save the nation is equipped (42:1). Similarly, God calls and equips Cyrus (45:1-7). If the picture of life and death in Israel was indeed as we have suggested, the hearers of this prophecy must have understood the prophet to be speaking of the *dead* receiving *life*.

In Chapter 2 we showed that Israel's redemption could be spoken of as an act of creation by God's word. That this notion is inextricably associated with the giving of *rūah*, the spirit of life, has been discussed in the foregoing section. Thus we can argue that the centrality of the idea that redemption is creation from nothing is paralleled by that of redemption as a raising of the dead to life.

Finally, the link between righteousness and life demonstrated above shows that the statements about righteousness in Deutero-Isaiah can equally be regarded as statements about life. Thus the declaration to Israel 'that her iniquity is pardoned' (40:2) is equally a declaration of release from death. Nevertheless, it is only by returning to the Lord, rather than remaining cut off from him that the unrighteous will receive pardon (55:6f) since "Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength" (45:24). Thus he seems to criticise the cult as a mere formality without genuine basis (48:1)⁸⁸ and emphasizes that righteousness comes from outside man, given and established by his creative word:

Shower, O heavens, from above,
and let the skies rain down righteousness;
let the earth open, that salvation may sprout forth,
and let it cause righteousness to spring up also;
I the Lord have created it. (45:8)
By myself I have sworn,
from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness
a word that shall not return:
'To me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear.' (45:23)

Alternatively, he says of his chosen servant,

I have put my Spirit upon him,
he will bring forth justice to the nations.

Those who keep the commandments are righteous (48:18); such are said to have God's law in their hearts (51:7) and are assured they, unlike those who reject them and their ways, need not fear death (51:7f). In fact, if God helps a man that is evidence that he is righteous (50:9), and conversely, those who dwell in the realm of death cannot claim to be loyal or obedient to him (50:10). This inseparable link between the saving gifts of righteousness which is trust, loyalty and obedience (51:10), and *life*, is indisputably presented in the declaration:

Listen to me, my people,

and give ear to me, my nation;
 for a law will go forth from me,
 and my justice *for a light to the peoples*.
 My deliverance draws near speedily,
 my salvation has gone forth,
 and my arms will rule the peoples. (51:4f)

On the basis of this, then, we are again able to claim that the prophet's declaration of salvation is a declaration that God will give *life* to the *dead*. Since we showed in Chapter 3 that this salvation could equally be described as justification of the ungodly, we again assert the parallelism between being justified and receiving *life*. When this is held together with our finding in Chapter 3, that Deutero-Isaiah parallels justification and creation, and the conclusion drawn above that creation and receiving *life* are parallel, the three notions can be seen to be not only logically connected, but actually to be different expressions of the one declaration. The defeated, exiled Israelites were ungodly, as nothing, and *dead*. Deutero-Isaiah offers them hope by proclaiming God as him who creates out of nothing, justifies the ungodly, and gives *life* to the *dead*. Clearly we are here stating the case in terms which suit our particular purpose. In support of our claim, therefore, we quote Eichrodt's summing up of Deutero-Isaiah, which, although very differently phrased, makes a similar linking of the themes of creation, justification and the overthrow of death by life:

At the very beginning of this book of consolation the existence of the people of God is derived from the word; and, by contrast with the unspeakable sadness evoked by the vision of death's limitless dominion over mankind, firm ground is thereby indicated, on which hope can still find a foothold even in face of the withering and fading of Israel's national glory. 'The word of our God will stand forever' (v.8). In this word, which in the promise of judgement and salvation moves inexorably toward its own realization, the prophet recognizes the irrefragable loyalty of God's will to fellowship, which first took historical form in the election of Abraham, and which is to attain its goal in the redemption of the exiles to a new life on an earth returned to the harmony of Paradise.⁸⁹

Since Paul appears to have made particular reference to this writing in composing his epistle to the Romans,⁹⁰ it seems more than likely that Käsemann is right in

his interpretation that in Paul's theology "creation, resurrection and justification declare in fact one and the same divine action"⁹¹ and as such constitute the centre of Pauline theology, provided resurrection can be shown to be consistent with the idea we have of God giving *life* to the *dead* who have not *physically* died.

The Development of the Idea of Resurrection

Since when Paul speaks of God as him who raises the dead he at least includes a post-mortem resurrection, and since a significant part of Käsemann's argument for the centrality of justification in Paul's theology is his claim that justification is Paul's development of the primitive gospel of the resurrection of Jesus, it is important that we have some idea of the background of this sense of God giving life to the dead.

We have already stated that there is no evidence for such an idea having existed in classical, pre-exilic Judaism, which appears simply to have accepted death as inevitable. There were a few exceptions to this, which were accepted as miraculous events⁹² and in no way to be looked at as a basis for expectation or hope. It was also believed that God might take a particularly favoured and righteous person, directly to himself, so that he simply disappeared without trace.⁹³ This is said to have been the case with Enoch and Elijah. Nevertheless, the basic contradiction between the promise of life to those who remained loyal to Yahweh and accepted his commandments, and the obvious everyday realities that *death came to all*, and that *the righteous were not necessarily better off than the wicked*, gave rise in the early post-exilic period to alternative speculations.

Since, as we have seen, being in relationship with God was seen as the most significant aspect of life in its true sense, probably the earliest movement *towards* a notion of ongoing life was the conviction that this fellowship could not be disrupted, though a rational working out of the form of this is absent. According to von Rad⁹⁴, this probably developed amongst "cultic personnel". These writers spiritualised certain traditions, removing them "from the sphere of material life".⁹⁵ These include the cultic sacrificial feast (Ps 63:5; 36:8f), refuge in God as for a fugitive in the temple (Ps 36:7; 23; 142:5), God as portion, meaning

the special relationship which originally referred to the provision for the Levites who were not apportioned land as the other tribes were. (Ps 16:5f; 73:26; cf. Num 18:20, Deut 10:9). Each of these psalms express the remarkable view that these spiritual gifts mean more to them than the gift of life, hitherto seen as the greatest good; looking for their continuance while assuming the unrighteous will have their lives brought to an end. This is stated most starkly in Ps 63:3: 'thy steadfast love is *better than life*. Ps 73:17-19 indicates that it is only the sudden conviction that nothing is of value except fellowship with God that enables the psalmist to come to terms with the apparent contradictions of everyday life, in particular the fact that the wicked seem to prosper while the righteous went unrewarded, despite their loyalty.⁹⁶

It is, of course, inappropriate to approach these psalms with questions they simply do not address. As von Rad says, "To ask boldly whether we are concerned with life in this world, or with a future life, is to misunderstand . . . completely. It is not a matter of either."⁹⁷ Thus when in Ps 16:10 we find the declaration,

For thou dost not give me up to Sheol,
or let thy godly one see the Pit.

it must be understood, at least for the original writer and hearers, as a declaration about God's faithfulness rather than as a specific belief about future life. The point is that

What the psalmist has discovered to be real cannot be so easily put aside. The defiance of death springs not from any innate quality or virtue or strength of mankind but from confidence in the Creator God. The God of life will not have his purpose thwarted by an interloping power. The ground of that confidence is the God whom he has known to be real throughout the course of his life.⁹⁸

Nevertheless, it seems more than likely that this basic perception did form the basis of subsequent belief in resurrection as a counter belief to the otherwise seemingly inevitable disruption of this fellowship with God.

Old Testament faith was not always clear on this point, and from time to time scholars have posited that what became ultimately a belief in life after death must have been due in large measure to the influence of other religions with which those people come in contact. That there were external influences cannot be denied, but there is something within Old Testament faith itself that pushed on relentlessly to this point. Death is an interloper in the world created by the God of the Hebrews. The attempt to articulate this resurrection belief is often faltering and muted, but there is every evidence of its presence. It was written of Enoch that he 'walked with God; then he was no more, for God took him'. In the story of the great prophet Elijah we are told that he 'went up by a whirlwind into heaven'. To take this literally is, of course, absurd. What we have here is a tradition about a great man, a tradition embellished by time. But the point of the story is not so readily dismissed. What is said, as it was in the case of Enoch, is that the lives of certain great men were lived in such close communion with God that it could not be believed that they had suffered the same fate as ordinary mortals. What is said at first of the great is said at length of the ordinary person. The writer of Psalm 16 could confidently assert, in his own case, that God would not abandon him to the power of death.⁹⁹

Significant in this, as Rowley points out, is that all the emphasis is on the value of life *with God*. There is no sense of man's intrinsic worth, or that ordinary life is too good to be simply abandoned in death. Only that life which God gives to those in fellowship with him is worth preserving. "It is because the abiding God is the source of that life that the life is abiding."¹⁰⁰

Similarly, though some bitterness over the lack of material reward for the righteous, and the apparently scornful and oppressive prosperity of the unrighteous was inevitable, the fundamental basis of hope, that this would be compensated for by ongoing fellowship with God for the righteous and death of the wicked, was again the conviction that God would be true to his promise. If the wicked really *were* better off than the righteous, God would be discredited. This, of course, was unthinkable for his loyal followers. Thus it was not only, or even primarily, concern that the righteous themselves be vindicated, but above all that God himself be vindicated. Otherwise the whole faith was called into question.¹⁰¹ This seems to be the key theme in Job. Resisting all suggestions to the contrary, he holds firm to the conviction of his own righteousness, despite all the disasters

that befall him, convinced that God will have to vindicate him, in order to save face himself. Throughout, Job reiterates the basic fact that all men must die¹⁰² so he has to hope for this vindication before he dies. Nevertheless, it *may* be that he does just once venture to suggest that, should this vindication fail to come *before* he dies, he will at least temporarily be brought back to life, in order for this to take place. Such is his confidence that his living Lord will acknowledge his righteousness¹⁰³:

For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at last he will stand upon the earth;
and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then from my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another. (Job 19:25-27)

This passage is sufficiently ambiguous for it to remain uncertain whether the sense suggested above really is contained in it. The general consensus seems to be that this idea does not actually constitute a belief in resurrection. At best it is a daring suggestion. Rowley says, "He seems to me to be reaching out after something more satisfying than the common view, but not yet to have grasped it securely."¹⁰⁴ This interpretation is supported by Bertholet's observation that Job makes such constant reference to the assumption that death is a final end, that one is led to suspect that he at least hoped that it would be otherwise.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, he may simply have been using pictorial language to emphasize his utter confidence.¹⁰⁶ Other passages which show this sort of movement towards a resurrection faith are Hosea 6:1f,

Come, let us return to the Lord;
for he has torn, that he may heal us;
he has stricken, and he will bind us up.
After two days he will revive us;
on the third day he will raise us up,
that we may live before him.

and Ezekiel 37:1-14, the vision of the raising of the dry bones of Israel to life, by the infusion of divine breath according to God's word. It is generally agreed

that these passages speak not of individual human resurrection, but of a divine assurance that the seriously depleted post-exilic nation, low in morale and believing itself to be cut off from God and without hope (Ezek 37:11), will indeed be brought back to its former life and strength in the promised land, under his Lordship (Ezek 37:14). This again reflects absolute confidence on the part of the prophets in the faithfulness of God to his promises, irrespective of appearances or human perception of the situation.¹⁰⁷

While these passages clearly do not actually refer to renewal after total annihilation, the equivalent for the nation of biological death for a human being, it is highly likely that they "helped to give currency to the idea of individual resurrection".¹⁰⁸ It is accepted that biblical interpretation must first attempt to understand texts as they would have been understood by the hearers for whom they were written. It is nevertheless valid also to enquire into how the texts may have been understood by subsequent readers¹⁰⁹, and there is every reason to believe that, with growing belief in resurrection, from about the 2nd century B.C. onwards, passages such as these were very much understood to speak of God raising the physically dead. Arguing back from Rabbinic exegetical method, and in view of the question of resurrection being a live issue at the time that the Old Testament texts of the Prophets and Writings were being given their final form, Sawyer¹¹⁰ suggests that it may well be valid to assert that the redactors *did* see these passages as confirmation of the belief in resurrection.¹¹¹ For them, he believes, such passages would have been regarded as

clear expressions of belief in God's power to create out of the dust and decay of the grave a new humanity where good lives do not end in suffering and justice prevails.¹¹²

Whether or not Sawyer is right about these passages, it is indisputable that belief in resurrection from physical death, in some form or another, became a significant belief in mainstream Judaism from that time on. If, however, Hosea 6:1f and Ezekiel 37:1ff were indeed influential on subsequent development, they are of particular relevance to our discussion in that here, for the first time, the idea that life after death involves God *raising* the dead is brought to expression.

Before proceeding to discuss further developments, we draw attention to the point that in Ezek 37 we again have the inseparable interconnection of the three themes Käsemann finds to be central in Romans. The parallel with the Gen 2 creation story, where God creates the living creatures, including man, by breathing in his breath, combined with the statement that here this action takes place according to God's word, communicated by the prophet, to whom God's word was given, shows that the envisioned event is the work of the God who creates *ex nihilo*. The vision of the bones of the Israelite being taken from their graves, enlivened and made alive by God's breath or spirit (v.14) presents God as one who raises the dead. The combination of these images shows that the raising of the dead can be spoken of as re-creation, and *vice versa*. Additionally, as we have seen, in the cult, life is synonymous with righteousness, while death takes one out of the cult, thus rendering one unrighteous, or, in the terms of Rom 4:5, ungodly. Thus God's action in the vision can be spoken of as justification of the ungodly. In fact we could go so far as to say that, *by definition*, raising the dead is justification of the ungodly, and conversely. Finally, since raising the dead is an act of creation out of nothing, so too, justification of the ungodly is creation out of nothing. In Ezek 37:1ff, the three notions are one hundred per cent equivalent.¹¹³ *They are simply different ways of speaking about, or describing one concept.* Which phraseology is used can thus be chosen according to context, without the actual declaration being changed, if the message of Ezek 37 is to be applied beyond its original circumstances.

Since the inclusion of justification in the above argument is based on an equivalence argued elsewhere, we draw attention to confirmatory statements from Ezek 37 itself. Firstly, the result of this action is that those raised shall know that God is the Lord (vv.6,13f). This is a statement which announces mutual relationship and responsibility between God and the people. It declares the establishment of right relationship which presupposes righteousness.¹¹⁴ Secondly, in accordance with this relationship, God also announces that he will fulfill the promise which constitutes behaviour appropriate to it, hereby establishing *his* righteousness, by saying, 'I will place you in your own land' (v.14). Finally, knowing God to be Lord, and living, carry the sense of ongoingness that depends on and thus implicitly assumes, that the people will maintain the loyalty and observances that constitute righteousness for the particular relationship with God that he re-

establishes in this creative act.¹¹⁵ Thus, although righteousness is not specifically mentioned here, there can be no doubt that it, too, is integrally involved in the prophet's vision for his nation's future.

The book of Ezekiel is distinctive amongst the writings considered so far, in that it is an early form of apocalyptic literature. It is at heart a protest at the continuing weakness and vulnerability of Israel in the post-exilic period. Far from the wonderful renewal prophesied in Deutero-Isaiah, the people had been freed from exile only to be even further oppressed, and later persecuted, by Gentiles.¹¹⁶ Despair, suffering, lack of effective leadership, fear of the enemy and the infiltration of their religion as a further weakening force within the Jewish nation, gave rise to this symbolic, mythological, fiercely nationalist and anti-Gentile¹¹⁷ form of writing. It attempted to cope with the nation's seemingly hopeless situation by claiming, on the basis of the past, the ongoing faithfulness of God in the present and especially the future, which would culminate in a great act which would bring consolation for the Jews, and the punishment of destruction for the hated Gentiles. Meanwhile reactionary entrenchment of Yahwism was called for, presumably both to ensure favour with God and to provide a strong defence against Hellenization.

As an early form of this, Ezekiel's expectation was limited, as we have seen, to hope of a national renewal not significantly different from that in Deutero-Isaiah, though more dramatic since the nation was seen to be in such dire straits by his time of writing. Is 24-27, sometimes called the Isaiah Apocalypse, is the first instance of a fully characteristic apocalypse. Apart from the features already to be found in Ezekiel, here death becomes personified, an active enemy of Yahweh, and Yahweh is presented as Lord over *death*, as over another being or power, rather than simply over the dead in *shé'ol*, insofar as that was accepted to be the case anyway.¹¹⁸ Thus the earlier view of the living Lord giving or withdrawing life is extended so that he is now seen also to give or withdraw death. On the day of restitution prophesied he will not only bring the utter destruction consistent with a wholesale withdrawal of life, but will also actively impose death in a fuller sense paralleling the fuller sense of life, in that he will actually *punish* the dead:

On that day the Lord will punish

the host of heaven, in heaven,
and the kings of the earth, on the earth.
They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit;
they will be shut up in a prison,
and after many days they will be punished. (Is 24:21f)

To all who are still alive he will give life, described as a banquet, and at the same time entirely remove both the present encroachment and future threat of death:

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. *He will swallow up death for ever*, and the Lord will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken. (25:6-8)¹¹⁹

Further, in response to protests that God had not met his promises to former generations of his people, so that their suffering had not been vindicated, there is now the promise that these people will be raised from the dead to enjoy the benefits of the newly created death free world:

Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise.
O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!
For thy dew is a dew of light,
and on the land of the shades thou wilt let it fall. (26:19)

Thus, as with other passages discussed, the emphasis behind this writing is complete confidence in God's faithfulness to his promise, to righteous behaviour in relation to the covenant, apparently with no room being given to any notion that his people might have failed to uphold their side, or that God would behave differently even if they had. Seemingly Deutero-Isaiah stands out alone in emphasizing mutual responsibility for the unhappy state of the nation.

This expression does represent something new in that for the first time there is unambiguous reference to the dead being raised as well as to the release and

renewal of that part of the nation still in existence. Whether this was for the writer(s) an actual belief, or whether it was a dramatic picture painted for rhetorical impact, we would agree with Sawyer that the final redactor would have read this as a definite reference to the physically dead being raised.¹²⁰ This final emergence, not only of a definite statement on a basically forbidden subject, but also the astonishing claim that God would so act on the ritually unclean, represents a remarkable step. So daring a postulation, in view of the long adherence to views opposed to any such propositions, must be a measure of the extreme stress under which the nation, particularly the religious leaders, found themselves. In suggesting that the people were driven to this position by their despair, Frost says,

It was left to the apocalypticist to see that there need be no disloyalty; rather, that a God who is only a God of the Living—as the Old Testament understood life—is, in a world where all men are notoriously mortal, not truly God at all. Either Yahweh is Lord of *sh'e'ol* as well as Lord of Heaven and Earth, or He is not truly Lord of Man.¹²¹

Remarkable also in this passage is the change from hope that eventually a final generation would know a life of peace and prosperity in the promised land, to a hope that the whole nation past and present would enjoy such a privilege. This probably grows out of the desire for justice for the righteous of the past who in apocalyptic thought were held up as idealized examples to the people of the present, although it also reflects, and encourages, the growing individualism of which we have already spoken.

With regard to our particular interest in the relation between resurrection, justification and creation, it is to be noted here that the introduction of the idea of death being a power opposed to God makes it possible to speak of death encroaching on the lives of the righteous, rather than a devaluing of life through partial withdrawal of the breath of life, and, taking this to its logical conclusion, to have a notion of the righteous dead. This suggests that what had been a formalised cultic re-affirmation of loyalty seems now to have been taken to such an extent that there was simply no genuine acknowledgement of unrighteousness. Consequently, when the prophecy speaks of God raising the dead, it seems to be understood as an action of justifying the *righteous*, rather than the *ungodly*.

Daniel 12:2 is the one Old Testament passage that seems to be universally accepted by scholars as unambiguous belief in the resurrection of the physically dead: 'And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' Here we are far removed from the pictures presented in the Psalms, Deutero-Isaiah and Ezekiel. The emphasis on God's intimate involvement has drifted into the background. The concern for the whole nation, and the perception of it as a unity are gone. Life after death is no longer concerned with continuance of the all important life in fellowship with God, but with just retribution on righteous and ungodly alike. The anticipated self-justifying action of God is as much concerned with punishment of Israelites who have wronged him as with rewarding justification of those who have remained loyal. Thus the formerly inseparable notions of raising the dead and justifying the ungodly are totally severed. The raising of the dead, far from being a renewing creative act of bringing back those cut off from Yahweh, is now isolated as a separate action, preceding a judgement which *condemns* those who had become cut off, and *rewards* the loyal as if it were they themselves, and not God's spirit, that had kept them in fellowship with him. Thus it would seem that there is now a radical split between the notions of life and death and the notion of righteousness. Justification, far from being an act of creation out of nothing, is perceived rather as a giving of glory to those who know themselves to have heroically earned such status. The deep faith and humility which paved the way for a profoundly theological understanding of death as well as life, seems to have been replaced by some sort of pious, self-congratulating, exclusivist bill of rights or claims to be made on a God who owes something to those who maintain allegiance to him.

This undoubtedly is an overly harsh interpretation based on a single short sentence. To be fair we should at least place this verse in its historical context, in order to understand the reasons for these changes, though we hold to our view that the theological base has at best been dangerously eroded or shrouded, albeit for the most valid of historical reasons. The Book of Daniel was written during the Maccabean Revolt. In the face of an active programme of Hellenization, designed to break apart the coherence of the Jewish nation, it was both politically and religiously prudent to issue the direct warning against apostasy. Those who succumbed to threats or pressure and abandoned the faith and nation

would not have their name 'written in the book' (v.1), so would not be delivered at the anticipated 'time of trouble'. Even if they were to die meantime, they would not escape the living death of contempt and shame awaiting them. On the other hand, those who had wisdom, which by then was synonymous with life, and remained loyal despite all, could count on being benefitted thereby. Similarly those who actively succeeded in dissuading potential apostates, or winning actual apostates back to the faith, thereby turning 'many to righteousness' (v.3) which must have involved considerable risk, were encouraged by the promise of recognition in the life to come of their contribution to the nation, which could not be suitably rewarded in the hostile situation. Since under a concerted attack the response of each individual affected the whole nation, and since hope of successful re-establishment of the nation must have been negligible, so hope for the future had to be both individualized and taken out of the context of the normal course of history. Only radical divine intervention could achieve what the people longed for but had no hope of achieving by human means. And only promises and threats weightier than any that Hellenism and/or the persecutors could present were likely to instil the determination or fear that would counter otherwise certain and permanent annihilation of the Hebrew people.

4.1.2 The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

The writings of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, being predominantly apocalyptic in form, demonstrate continuing belief in some sort of life after death, thereby indicating that it was assumed that Yahweh was a God who gives life to the dead, and uniquely so. Although this does not always assume resurrection from the grave, there does seem to be an understanding that life, as the fullness which God alone can give, would begin at a specific point, so that we can broadly speak of all the various forms of anticipation of this life as requiring the belief that God is he who raises the dead.

When, in Chapter 3, we discussed this literature in the context of the idea that God justifies the ungodly, we found there was considerable emphasis on the possibility of the unrighteous turning back to God, and the assurance that he would mercifully accept those who did, despite their past failure.¹²² On the basis of the

ideas of life and death we have found to have prevailed in Classical Judaism, we can now speak of repentance as a turning from death to life. The fact that God is sometimes depicted as actively encouraging or initiating this, by using punishment in order to bring the unrighteous to seek his mercy¹²³ over and above simply offering this as an option, suggests at least that it was taken to be his *desire* that the dead should turn to life. Just as earlier we concluded that this could be regarded as justification of the ungodly only in a limited sense¹²⁴, so here we can speak of this as only a very limited notion of the dead being raised, both because the change is dependent on man's initial action, and because, under the historical circumstances, fullness of life could not realistically be hoped for in the immediate situation, so that the repentance was encouraged as a means of making oneself *eligible* for the anticipated new life, rather than as giving access to it in the present.

As we noted in Chapter 2, the writers of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha no longer held out the traditional hope of Israel becoming *within history* the nation they had expected God to have made them, and so had come to anticipate a universal transformation of the present order¹²⁵, which we there described as a creation out of nothing. This universal transformation which God was expected to bring about is consistent with and, in most cases, an extended or more fully described version of the prophecy of Dan 12¹²⁶, or some combination of this with the account of the assumption of Enoch in Gen 5:24. Although there are both ambiguity and variety in the pictures painted¹²⁷, in broadest terms we could say that it was believed that on some future day the present life and world, or age, would be brought to an end with a great divine judgement of both the living and the dead, the latter having been preserved in death until that time. Opinions vary as to whether those judged to be ungodly would simply be destroyed, or whether they would suffer some sort of after-life punishment. There is also diversity of opinion about whether or not the Gentiles would be included, though suffering under them did foster a desire for *them* to suffer for their ill-treatment of the Jews. More generally held, and naturally of more immediate concern to the writers, was the belief that the righteous, those who had remained faithful to Yahwehism, would be established in the newly transformed world, where they would live out their intended life as God's people, and would be joined in this by the righteous who had died but would be raised.

Having given this broad outline of the expectation, it has to be acknowledged that even this is a generalized and composite picture, built up from a variety of references from the sources.¹²⁸ Once questions of greater detail are asked, the range of answers becomes unmanageable, and certainly beyond the scope of this discussion. After studying relevant passages in 14 texts from Palestinian Judaism, and 12 from Hellenistic Judaism, Cavallin speaks of "a great variety and pluralism of ideas"¹²⁹ on the subject of life and death. He goes on,

These ideas, partly contrary, partly possible to harmonize, but seldom actually harmonized, do not only change from one stream of tradition to another, but appear simply juxtaposed in the same writings and even in passages very close to each other. Thus, resurrection (of the body) and immortality (of the soul) are combined, perhaps only by juxtaposition. They may also be harmonized or systematized into an intermediate state of the dead souls between death and the final resurrection of the body. Different images express the newness of the life beyond death. Sometimes this new life of the righteous (and the punishment of the sinners) is considered to commence immediately after death, sometimes on the Last Day or in an eschatological future which is not precisely defined.

This leads me to the conclusion that the single ideas, images, visions, symbols, teachings and intimations about after-life in Early Judaism were not of great importance to the authors themselves, nor, probably, to their first readers. The texts themselves require a sort of "demythologizing", if we wish to apprehend their *message*, the common underlying motifs and the intentions expressed in all the variations of symbols and concepts about life after death. It is the task of the interpreter to try to transpose or translate the various symbols into a language of abstraction and theory concerning the human person and his relation to God, the meaning of human existence and death. This is what I mean, when I use the term "demythologizing".¹³⁰

On the basis of his study, Cavallin refutes the commonly held idea that Palestinian Judaism had a materialistic view of resurrection, emphasizing the resurrection of the body.¹³¹ Whilst acknowledging that the idea of an immortal soul independent of a body is confined to Hellenistic documents, these latter also have clear references to resurrection of the body, and both Palestinian and Hellenistic sources make mention of "the heavenly, transcendent, glorified and spiritual state of the righteous in the new life after death."¹³² Generally speaking, the

documents remain silent on the question of how the transformation of those still living to new life might have been envisioned. Despite all this variety and ambiguity on details of how, when and where and for whom life after death will be given, there seems to be general agreement throughout the documents that all will come under divine judgement and be duly rewarded or punished.¹³³ The idea of the present age coming to an end on some future day, when a new age will be instituted also, occurs frequently.¹³⁴ These beliefs, then, must be central to our attempt to 'demythologise' or interpret the apocalyptic expectation theologically.

Before proceeding with our interpretation, however, we make reference to an example of belief in immediate, individual resurrection, since this notion did not come up in our discussion of the Old Testament. Probably the most dramatic example is the story of the martyrdom of seven Jewish brothers and their mother, related in 2 Macc 7. The scene of the drama is set in 7:1-2, where Antiochus is endeavouring to force the brothers to compromise their faith and is told in no uncertain terms that his efforts are futile:

It happened also that seven brothers and their mothers were arrested and were being compelled by the king, under torture with whips and cords, to partake of unlawful swine's flesh. One of them, acting as their spokesman, said, "What do you intend to ask and learn from us? For we are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our fathers."

The king is so enraged at such a bold and unequivocal declaration of loyalty to their faith, that he brutally kills each in turn, in front of the rest. As each dies, a different retort, of confidence or threat, the first four professing that God raises those who are loyal from the dead¹³⁵, is flung at the king, while the mother gives unflinching support and encouragement:

Filled with a noble spirit, she fired her woman's reasoning with a man's courage, and said to them, "I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to

you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws.”
(7:21-23)

Her appeal to her youngest son not to waver in his faith takes the form of a reminder that heaven and earth and mankind were made by God who creates out of nothing¹³⁶, and concludes with the entreaty, “Accept death, so that in God’s mercy I may get you back again with your brothers.” (7:29b) The boy shows how superfluous is his mother’s special petition by turning to address the king before she has even finished speaking. In a long tirade he gives the gist of each of his brothers’ retorts, and explains their overall motivation:

^{30b}What are you waiting for? I will not obey the king’s command, but I obey the command of the law that was given to our fathers through Moses. ³¹But you, who have contrived all sorts of evil against the Hebrews, will certainly not escape the hands of God. ³²For we are suffering because of our own sins. ³³And if our living Lord is angry for a little while, to rebuke and discipline us, he will again be reconciled with his own servants. ³⁴But you, unholy wretch, you most defiled of all men, do not be elated in vain and puffed up by uncertain hope, when you raise your hand against the children of heaven. ³⁵You have not yet escaped the judgement of the almighty, all-seeing God. ³⁶For our brothers after enduring a brief suffering have drunk of everflowing life under God’s covenant; but you, by the judgement of God, will receive just punishment for your arrogance. ³⁷I, like my brothers, give up body and life for the laws of our fathers, appealing to God to show mercy soon to our nation and by afflictions and plagues to make you confess that he alone is God, ³⁸and through me and my brothers to bring to an end the wrath of the Almighty which has justly fallen on our whole nation. (7:30b-38)

Needless to say he was instantly and even more brutally put to death, ‘So he died in his integrity, putting his whole trust in the Lord’ (v.40), his mother’s death following thereafter (v.41).

This chapter demonstrates with remarkable clarity the linking of traditional views about life and death with the apocalyptic belief in the possibility of life after physical death. God is the living Lord (v.33) who gave life in the beginning and continues to do so. In the beginning he created by his breath, or his word,

bringing into existence that which did not exist, infusing his life-giving breath into his creatures. So as Lord over life and death he has the power to recreate, giving renewed life to the dead. Thus the theologically essential, inseparable interdependence of creation and the giving of life, seen above, is repeated: *the God who creates out of nothing is the God who raises the dead*. The basis for the brothers' confidence that this is indeed the case is the covenant (v.36). As we saw above¹³⁷, the most basic expression of the covenant is that if the people accept Yahweh as Lord he will give them life—the 'everflowing life' referred to in v.36. This acceptance of Yahweh's Lordship, which is analogous to choosing life, means allowing Yahweh to direct one's behaviour through his commandments. In other words, to obey the law is to choose life. Hence, by their immovable refusal to disobey the law, the brothers announce both their desire and their right to life. Since physical death is clearly imminent, for God to remain righteous, which he must¹³⁸, by fulfilling his side of the covenant, he is assumed to have no choice but to give life after death to those who righteously maintain the obedience which the covenant demands of them. Thus it is clear that *justification and resurrection, are mutually and inseparably dependent, and axiomatic theological presuppositions*. So here again we find evidence indicating the probability that Käsemann's thesis regarding the centre of Paul's theology is correct.

A further link with Romans occurs in v.40 in the above passage. The youngest brother is described as 'putting his whole *trust* in God'. Faced with the choice between a certain future of power and prosperity, according to the promise of Antiochus 'that he would make him rich and enviable if he would turn from the ways of his fathers, and that he would take him for his friend and entrust him with public affairs' (v.24), and, from a human point of view, the highly unlikely promise of life after death¹³⁹, he chooses the latter. By thus investing his life in his belief in 'him who raises the dead', he demonstrates the sort of faith which Paul attributes to Abraham in Rom 4:16-22. Ultimately, it is this faith, and not his adherence to the particular law against eating 'swine's flesh', that is significant. It is *because* of his *faith* that he refuses to break the law, and this is what earns him life. Insofar as he is martyred for his adherence to the law, it is only because the law is the means by which he expressed his *loyalty* to Yahweh, and not that he believes his obedience as such *earns* him a reward. That this is the case is reinforced by the very fact that it was by trying to force disobedience

that Antiochus attempted to break the Jews adherence to 'the ways of [their] fathers'. Thus we argue that *this act of martyrdom is a demonstration of belief in justification by faith*, comparable with Abraham's believing the impossible promise of innumerable descendants. Even the nature of the promise connects more closely than might first appear, since, as we have seen, it was through one's descendants that at the time the story of Abraham was recorded¹⁴⁰, one hoped for ongoing participation in the life of the nation, and especially the cult, after physical death.¹⁴¹ For both Abraham and the martyrs, belief in the God who raises the dead was an essential part of their being 'reckoned righteous'.

Additionally, support for our interpretation of the common theological basis of 2 Macc 7 and Romans is to be found in the assertions in 2 Macc 7:18,32: the two martyrs to whom these verses are attributed, far from asserting their righteousness, actually attribute their suffering to their *own sinfulness*. There is no indication that they have *earned* life, and yet they look forward to receiving it *as a gift* because of God's commitment to compassion (v.6) and reconciliation with his servants (v.33). As in Deutero-Isaiah¹⁴², and some other of the intertestamental writings¹⁴³, God's desire to maintain his chosen people, for *his sake* and *the sake of the creation*, overrides the permanent severance of relationship with him which, according to the rules of the covenant, he could in all justice inflict on them. The notion that God could employ the most unexpected means of inflicting disciplinary punishment in order to win his people back, is also reminiscent of Deutero-Isaiah.¹⁴⁴ If we are correct in finding a basic theme of justification of the ungodly in Duetero-Isaiah, then equally we can affirm the same doctrine here.

Finally, other ideas common to Deutero-Isaiah and the text under discussion seem to us to put a final seal on our case. Firstly, the youngest son claims that the motivation behind his family being prepared to endure severe suffering is the hope that this will be accepted as punishment for the whole nation, so that through their deaths, the rest of the nation might be spared further punishment, and brought from death to life, as these terms apply to those still living on earth. This notion shares something with the picture of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah, especially Is 53. This, of course, was of central importance in early interpretations of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the idea of this event having defeated sin

and death being a strong Pauline theme. Secondly, the reference, in 2 Macc 7:37, to plagues and afflictions echoes an element of the Exodus theme, paralleling Deutero-Isaiah's appeal to God having created the nation as a basis for belief that he would re-create it¹⁴⁵, and again confirms the links between resurrection, justification and creation. Thirdly, the notion that even the oppressor would, under the action of God, be brought to 'confess that he alone is God' is a notion which occurs in Deutero-Isaiah, and is used by Paul in his argument for the inclusion of the Gentiles and a universal church.¹⁴⁶ Fourthly, the reference to astounding things happening (2 Macc 7:18) is consistent with other references to God justifying the ungodly¹⁴⁷ and creating out of nothing.¹⁴⁸ *The interaction of all these various notions in close proximity seems to us to affirm an infrangible association of the belief that God raises the dead with those of belief in him as the one who brings into existence that which does not exist, and who justifies the ungodly.*

In order to complete our picture of beliefs about the resurrection, we note that, in addition to the individual and immediate aspects of resurrection in 2 Macc 7, and the notion of a few bearing punishment for the sake of the whole nation, the specific belief in reunion with loved ones (v.41) and the positive attitude to death, even a violent death, are new. The idea of actively choosing death as an act of faithfulness was radically new to Judaism, and a direct product of the severe persecution. The chance to honour God by dying rather than abandoning him could actually be welcomed. Further, martyrdom could also be faced with joy as an act of witness which might discourage apostasy.¹⁴⁹ This aspect is brought out in 2 Macc 6:24-28, where an old scribe, Eleazar, is offered the chance to escape death by only pretending to eat forbidden meat. His immediate response is to reject the proposal for fear that young people would think he had abandoned his faith and so be led astray by his example, while he would gain nothing because avoidance of the human punishment would incur divine punishment. Death could also be regarded as a blessing in that it freed one from further suffering.¹⁵⁰

We return now to the more generalized picture of apocalyptic expectation in order to outline the most significant points of the underlying theology, the task which Cavallin described as 'demythologizing' (p.36 above). On p.37, we noted that the most consistently occurring theme is that of judgement and retribution. This is

the response of apocalyptic to the problem, first tackled in Psalm 73, that, despite the promise of the covenant, human experience is that in many cases the wicked or ungodly seem to enjoy prosperity and a good life while the righteous experience deprivations constituting the encroachment of death, as often as not exacerbated by wrongs perpetrated against them by the already thriving wicked. The problem is most acutely felt when faithful Israelites suffer at the hands of oppressive Gentiles or when apostasy seems to be rewarded rather than condemned. Like Job, these Israelites were confident that God would vindicate them, making up for their sufferings with a glorious life of fellowship with him *after* death, since no hope of relief within history could reasonably be held. Conversely, as in Psalm 73, the ungodly would be deprived of such blessing and would either disappear into the insignificance and impotence of death, or, with the additional option of resurrection, might actually suffer torment—a sort of living death paralleling the abundance of life anticipated by the faithful. The retribution, positive or negative, was decided at the judgement when each person was either justified or condemned.

Whereas in pre-exilic Judaism, when the context was one of choosing life or death *as* an Israelite, so that justification could be claimed on the basis of a cultic reckoning that one was righteous, in the context of persecution it would seem, as we indicated in our discussion of 2 Macc 7, that the emphasis shifted to the question of whether one had remained loyal, so that justification was based on *faith*, rather than on a *cultic* affirmation of one's righteousness. Though naturally cultic obedience would still have been seen as an expression of faith, the definitive question was whether or not one had turned away from 'the ways of the fathers'. Thus we argue that, because of the circumstances, the notion that *justification is by faith* was *specifically* acknowledged.

In view of the fact that this judgement was seen to take place outside history, it is clear that resurrection was presupposed. Since, in addition, we know the notion of resurrection to be dependent on belief in God who, as giver of life, is creator, we can affirm that the anticipated salvation can be equally accurately described as justification, resurrection, *or* creation. While, in parallel with the faith of Abraham described in Rom 4:17, we can assert that these writers assumed that God is he who raises the dead and brings into existence that which does not exist,

the belief that it is the righteous whom God raises is retained¹⁵¹, even though the *emphasis* in *defining* righteousness has shifted *from* obedience to the *law* to loyalty to or faith in God. To this extent at least Paul shares the theological axioms of these intertestamental writers, as Käsemann maintains.

The other feature occurring with a considerable degree of consistency in the apocalyptic writings is the belief that there would come a point when God would bring history to an end, replacing the present world limited by time and sin and death, with a new world—either on earth or in heaven—in which all life would exist in harmonious fellowship with God so that the life of righteousness as defined by the covenant, or true creativeness as intended for the creation, would go on unimpeded. Although there was an attraction for Israelites in this, in that it signalled a final end to suffering and humiliation, the chief concern behind this hope was that God would once and for all make a public declaration and display of himself as the God the Jews knew him to be—the unique, righteous creator who is Lord over life and death and all that is. By this final great act of vindication of his people God would vindicate himself. Whether this would be to the dismay of the ungodly, or whether, as in Deutero-Isaiah and 2 Macc 7:27, it would result in universal acknowledgement of Yahweh, is an area of less certainty in the literature. Nevertheless, it is clear that our three motifs once more form the core of this hope. By revealing himself as the righteous God who justifies the faithful, Israel's God simultaneously reveals himself as the living God who creates out of nothing and raises the dead.

4.1.3 The Qumran Writings

We saw in Chapter 2 that entry into the Qumran community was regarded as involving creation out of nothing¹⁵², which we then showed in Chapter 3 to be equally a justification of the ungodly.¹⁵³ On p.74 we discussed the community's expectation regarding salvation, pointing out that entry into the community itself was regarded as salvation, for those involved, but that there was also anticipation of a final day when the conflict between the righteous community members and their ungodly enemies would be ended once and for all by the destruction of the ungodly and all ungodliness, so that the life currently enjoyed within the

confines of the community would continue unencumbered and eternal. The fact that there is no discussion of death or indication of a belief in a *post-mortem* resurrection¹⁵⁴ is consistent with the particular outlook of the community.¹⁵⁵ Because these people isolated themselves in a closed community, they effectively *withdraw* themselves from history, and so were able to create the sort of ideal conditions that the majority of Jews believed could be found only outside history, in life after death. At the same time, insofar as total withdrawal is not possible, conflict with the ungodly remained. From the perspective of absolute confidence in their righteousness as demonstrated by strict adherence to the law, which was both facilitated by and a guarantee of ongoing fellowship with God, involvement in such conflict was a small price to pay. In fact it was a basis for thanksgiving since it served to highlight the good fortune of the community members who saw their election as being entirely beyond their own power or control.

From what we have already seen of Jewish beliefs about life and death, it is obvious that to be a community member was to have life, so that one's admission to the community could as easily be described as the action of the God who raises the dead as we have seen it to be that of him who creates out of nothing and justifies the ungodly. When we look for evidence of this¹⁵⁶, we find it expressed largely in terms used within classical Judaism. From what we have gleaned of the Essene attitude towards the future, it seems fair to say that the expectation is simply a more specifically articulated version of the hope expressed in Ps 16; 49; 73. The source of all meaning and possibility is ongoing fellowship with God—this is the sole desire of the righteous, here made especially clear by the verseion of the community. Consequently the present life of the ungodly is unimportant because they are denied His fellowship in the present, and are heading for destruction. Here the distinctive element in Qumran, as compared with the psalms, is the apocalyptic expectation that ultimately there will be a total elimination of the ungodly and all ungodliness, whereas the Psalmists could console themselves only in the anticipated death of each individual transgressor. Apart from these elements, the Qumran understanding of life and death is effectively the same as that of classical Judaism. The notions of life and death have their greatest significance as indications of the quality of earthly existence, this quality being entirely determined by one's relationship to God. As such, the terms used to refer to these states are all metaphorical, as in the Old Testament.

In reference to the initial election into fellowship with God, one of the most frequently used terms is light. God reveals himself as perfect light, thereby illuminating or enlightening his servant¹⁵⁷, who is then able to show light to others.¹⁵⁸ Light is contrasted with darkness, shame and dust or ashes, either as depicting the death out of which a member had been elected or the death from which he was now preserved.¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, light is paralleled with other expressions for life, or the giving of life, such as healing, refuge, deliverance, leveling of rough ground, joy and peace.¹⁶⁰ Another image for the initiation of fellowship which implies a gift of life to the dead is that of the opening of closed eyes and ears.¹⁶¹ References to water, sources of water, and living water either alone or along with notions such as glory and eternity are also used.¹⁶² Ideas of being strengthened, rescued from the pit and established by the Holy Spirit are applied to the receiving of life as rescue from danger or restoration after transgression for one already a community member.¹⁶³

Far and away the most common set of images, both for entrance and maintenance of life in fellowship with God is that of him giving knowledge, wisdom, truth, or understanding. In 4:27f knowledge is paralleled with illumination and God's infinite power, suggesting the possibility that this is an alternative metaphor for life. Associations of wisdom with creation, knowledge, learning and wisdom with the Holy Spirit, and glory and peace with truth and revelation, would all be consistent with this suggestion. That the spirit of knowledge leads one to choose truth, hate iniquity and love God, and conversely, that the unjust can be assumed to have no understanding, is reminiscent of the call in Deut 30:15-19 to choose life. Finally the image of a fountain of knowledge, combining the imagery of water as life with knowledge can also be seen to support the notion that references to knowledge and related concepts can be understood as references to life in the full Old Testament sense of the word.¹⁶⁴

The same approach occurs throughout the book of **Proverbs**. Things elsewhere attributed to, or associated with God's breath, spirit, gift of life or word are there related to wisdom, knowledge or understanding. God's creative word is regarded as a word of wisdom rather than as breath of life: 'The Lord by wisdom founded the earth' (3:19), 'from his mouth came knowledge and understanding' (2:6). The main context of wisdom is the commandments, so there is throughout

a strong link with Deut 30:15-19:

My son, keep my words
and treasure up my commandments with you;
keep my commandments and live (7:1f).

To reject knowledge is not to 'choose the fear of the Lord' (1:29) so that 'the simple are killed by their turning away' (1:32). Thus it is the foolish whose life is corroded by signs of the encroachment of death while the wise, who 'fear the Lord and turn away from evil' are healed and refreshed (3:7f) and enjoy the fullness of life intended for God's people (3:13-18).

Since it is indisputable that Proverbs regards knowledge as that which makes life in the fullest sense, to speak of God as the source of wisdom is to say that he is the source of life. Whether the writer consciously regarded 'wisdom' as a metaphor for 'life' or whether the former had substituted the latter in his thinking is not clear. Nevertheless, this precedent enables us to affirm with confidence that the emphasis on 'knowledge' in the Qumran Hymns can be interpreted as an emphasis on 'life'. Thus, to say that a creature of clay has been transformed by the gift of the spirit of knowledge is precisely equivalent to the Old Testament picture of the dead being transformed by the gift of life, in the context of God's action on an existing human being, as well as in the context of creation. Thus we can conclude that the key theological understanding of salvation, as entry into the community, is that God gives life to or raises the dead. Raising the dead is an act of creation out of nothing which justifies the ungodly, bringing them into fellowship with God, which is life. Thus we see once more that the faith Paul attributes to Abraham, highlighted by Käsemann, is the faith of Judaism throughout its history up to New Testament times. It is only the context given to this as it is related to experience, actual and anticipated, that varies with time or circumstance or religious subgroup.¹⁶⁵

4.1.4 The New Testament Era

There is only limited evidence as to how widespread was Jewish belief in *post-mortem* resurrection by the time of the first century A.D. The consensus of opinion is that,

From the time of the Maccabees belief in the hereafter, the resurrection and eternal life, was wholeheartedly accepted in many circles in Jewish theology, though it was not so widespread among the people either then or even in the early Christian period.¹⁶⁶

Whilst the apocalyptic documents demonstrate that it was "from at the latest the second century B.C., that a doctrine of the resurrection of the dead assumed a central position in Jewish thought"¹⁶⁷, it is equally clear from the silence on the subject in other contemporary literature¹⁶⁸ that the notion was not universally accepted, and in fact was opposed, in that period. Cavallin acknowledges the apologetic purpose of Josephus, for whom "belief in a life after death is quite important",¹⁶⁹ but quotes the following statement from Josephus:

Each individual, relying on the witness of his own conscience and the lawgiver's prophecy, confirmed by the sure testimony of God, is firmly persuaded that to those who observe the laws and, if they must needs die for them, willingly meet death, God has granted a renewed existence and in the revolution of ages the gift of a better life (Ap. 218f)

From this Cavallin concludes that in the second half of the first century A.D. "belief in life after death was shared by rather wide circles among Jews in Palestine and the diaspora".¹⁷⁰

Although eventually later Judaism did adopt belief in resurrection as a fundamental doctrine, the process was slow, despite the ongoing suffering of the nation. From the following remarks, it would seem that Cavallin *may* have put rather too much weight on Josephus' testimony:

The *Hasidim* and, following them, the Pharisees, profess the new faith; indeed it arises in their midst, and strengthens them in those centuries in which persecutions are unleashed against them: nevertheless the Jewish nation as a whole remains reserved about it for a long time; it will require long controversy and a succession of events, such as the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans, which marks the end of the priestly aristocracy, for it to become one of the fundamental dogmas of Judaism.¹⁷¹

Major opponents to the idea were the Samaritans and Sadducees. The Sadducees, being conservative anyway, were unwilling to accept any notion that could not be proved from the Pentateuch. In addition, the question was not so urgent for them since, as aristocracy they were not so forcefully confronted with the dichotomy between the promised life and actual experience.¹⁷²

4.1.5 Rabbinic Literature

Since, as a Pharisee, Paul can be assumed to be amongst those who held the belief that God raises the dead before he turned to faith in Jesus Christ, it is unnecessary to discuss the controversies and growth towards total acceptance of this doctrine as it is recorded in the Rabbinic Literature. As in the writings already discussed there is a mixture of views, some emphasizing the indestructible fellowship with God, referred to by many of the scholars as a belief in immortality, others focussing on the raising of the physically dead; some suggesting all men will be resurrected, others that only a few elect Jews will be raised to a life of bliss. Generalization would be that "In order to secure a blessed immortality, a man must normally be a Jew, for Israel is the heir—or at least, by somewhat grudging concession, a circumcised proselyte", there being a "normal lack of cordiality towards proselytes".¹⁷³

This would appear to be the sort of attitude that led Paul into trouble over his mission to Gentiles, and especially his position that circumcision was not essential. Because this debate arises in Romans, we quote the following rather lengthy passage from Stewart, as it would seem to throw light on the strength of the importance attached to this ritual, and therefore the degree to which Paul's

position is radical to the point of being abhorrent to his fellow Jews:

All Jews should have this happy expectation; yet they may, despite their birthright, exclude themselves by certain sins, such as denial of the fact that resurrection is taught in the Pentateuch. Isaac is said to sit constantly at the entrance to Gehinnom to deliver all his descendants from entering therein. But this is qualified elsewhere. The circumcised foreskin is normally the guarantee of entry. But for those guilty of exceptional carnal sin, or extreme doctrinal obliquity, there are ways of dealing with the matter. A guardian Abraham, while diverting almost all his descendants from the gates of Gehinnom, may nevertheless cut a few foreskins from un-circumcised babes, and graft them onto the members of Israelites deserving condemnation—or, if Abraham be too busy, the angel may stretch the foreskin so thoroughly as to remove the appearance of circumcision altogether. These unpleasant ideas may have had some historical prompting. Certain Jews, attracted by foreign cultures, were known to remove the physical vestiges of circumcision, thus repudiating, both spiritually and politically, their ancestral ties. The horror engendered in loyal compatriots by this apostasy possibly finds some echo in the passages just cited. The Rabbis would naturally concede no salvation for the fortuitous or surgical circumcision practised amongst Gentiles for hygienic reasons, as this would possess no sacramental significance in their eyes. It is sad to find the redeemed actually pictured as gloating over the misfortunes of the rejected. . . .

If a man is not a Jew, the Rabbis, in many of their teachings, do not hold out for him any hope of a blessed hereafter, even if he be endowed with every conceivable virtue, and even if he be Cyrus, the great benefactor of the Jewish race. He cannot save himself by the supreme Jewish virtue of charity—his heathen status makes this valueless, and he is considered to do it solely for his own reward or glory. In accordance with these convictions, Rabbis declare that certain foods are proscribed to the Jews because of their lofty spiritual destiny—God has not troubled to forbid them to Gentiles, who do not fall within His saving purpose. . . .

The individual Gentiles to whom salvation is conceded have generally performed some outstanding service to one of the Rabbis. . . . the salvation of a heathen soul is, in a large consensus of Rabbinic opinion, a phenomenon so exceptional as to call for full explanation. And yet the same Rabbis declare elsewhere that many Gentiles will be saved, not for especial virtue or humanity but solely because they happened in their lifetime to abstain from pork.¹⁷⁴

This latter point could well lie behind Rom 14.

The requirement for belief that the Pentateuch¹⁷⁵ witnesses to resurrection is interesting. The consensus of opinion amongst modern scholars is not only that it cannot be found, but also that it is inappropriate to read any of the Old Testament as if it specifically referred to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Seemingly the Rabbis had no such qualms. It was more important to find authority for the idea in the Pentateuch, and to a lesser degree, the Prophets and Writings, than to accept the views expressed in the extra-canonical books. To do this, the modern mind can regard their exegetical method as 'scientific' only in the sense described by Belloc¹⁷⁶:

The Microbe

The Microbe is so very small
You cannot make him out at all,
But many sanguine people hope
To see him through a microscope.
His jointed tongue that lies beneath
A hundred curious rows of teeth;
His seven tufted tails with lots
Of lovely pink and purple spots,
On each of which a pattern stands,
Composed of forty separate bands;
His eyebrows of a tender green;
All these have never yet been seen-
But Scientists, who ought to know,
Assure us that they must be so. . . .
Oh! let us never, never doubt
What nobody is sure about!

Sawyer explains that the method used was to regard such words that *do* occur in the context of the discussion of resurrection, such as live, to arise, to wake up, to take, and judgement, and to interpret them eschatologically whenever they occur, even though the intention of the original writer was clearly otherwise. Although this tends, in the Pentateuch, to find eschatological references where there is absolutely no suggestion of this, in the Writings and Prophets, where the movement is already in this direction, the results are actually not so absurd as might at first be expected.¹⁷⁷ Presumably this work was done to satisfy the

Sadducees, and made a requirement of faith in order to enforce them to accept its conclusions. The success of the prophets of the doctrine is such that some of the earliest references to it in the literature demonstrate its deep penetration into ordinary life. Thus, the second of the 18 Benedictions, said thrice daily, runs as follows:

Thou art mighty, bringing low the proud, strong, and the judge of the ruthless, living for evermore and *raising the dead*; making the wind to return and the dew to fall; nourishing the living and *making alive the dead*; bringing forth salvation for us in the blinking of an eyelid. Blessed art thou, O Lord, *who makest alive the dead*.¹⁷⁸ (our emphasis)

In addition, the graveside doxology includes the words, "He will cause you to arise. Blessed be He who keeps his word and raises the dead!" (T. Ber 7:5)

Here we have actual expression of the idea in the terms Paul uses in Rom 4:17: God is he 'who raises the dead'. It makes absolutely clear that "The power of resurrecting the body is the prerogative of God"¹⁷⁹, as does Deut R 7:6,

R. Jonathan said: God holds three keys in His hands over which no creature, not even angel or Seraph, has any control. They are as follows: the key of resurrection, the key of the barren woman, and the key of rain. Whence the key of resurrection? For it is said, *And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves (Ezek 37:13)*.

It was taken for granted that the creator God had the power actually to recreate a perished body, though belief in resurrection on the third day after death was widely spoken of, so many believed that the actual biological body would be raised. Others, while using the same terminology, believed the resurrection body would be something other than that of their earthly life.¹⁸⁰

4.1.6 Conclusion

We conclude from the foregoing that ideas of resurrection from the dead and eternal life were familiar to and held by Paul prior to his encounter with Christ. His ideas would have included a differentiation between life and death within life, as reflecting whether or not one was in fellowship, as an obedient servant, with the living Lord, and the notion that repentance based on faith in the covenant promises and the history of the nation could be regarded as taking one from death to life. He would also have had notions of the confidence of the faithful that their fellowship with God would continue unbroken, and that this was more powerful than death itself, so that one could expect God to raise the dead from their graves in order to perpetuate this, not only for the people's sake, but also his own. The idea, too, that God would one day reveal himself fully and finally, thereby vindicating himself and bringing to an end all ungodliness, and hence death, would also almost certainly have figured prominently in Paul's thought.

The fact that life was above all a gift given by God, in the sense of bringing man into existence, bringing him back from the realm of death to life after failure or danger, and in raising him again after death, must also have been known to Paul. Consequently, the inseparable inter-relation of creation, justification and resurrection as the work of the living God, pointed out above, must have formed the theological basis of Paul's religious faith and practice, especially if he had studied in a rabbinic school where, one assumes, the basis of beliefs would have been expounded and explained.

4.2 The God who Raises the Dead as a Unifying Theme in Romans

We have already shown how the notion that God is he who creates out of nothing lies behind the whole of Paul's argument in Romans. In light of the preceding section, we can now say that this is an affirmation that God is the living God. As the sole source of life, his *right* to Lordship over the whole creation, or in other words, his *righteousness*, is shown to be not only a *claim* on the basis that the world belongs to him as creator, but a *reality*, whether acknowledged or not, in

that *he is Lord over life and death*. To be cut off from him is to be cut off from life itself. We have also seen that to be cut off from God is to be ungodly. In Chapter 3 we showed that the notion that God is him who justifies the ungodly is also central to the whole of Romans, and equivalent to creation out of nothing. The reconciliation with God that justification of the ungodly constitutes brings the justified back into fellowship with God, i.e. back in touch with the source of life. Thus our study of the notion that God is he who raises the dead, as it occurs *outside* the New Testament, has shown that Käsemann is indeed right that this expression exactly parallels those which define God as justifier of the ungodly and creator out of nothing. Since we have shown these two themes are central to Romans, it follows *mutatis mutandis* that the definition of God as raiser of the dead must be equally central, so that further argument would seem to be superfluous.

Nevertheless, we will discuss the place of this last theme in the opening chapter of the epistle, in order to demonstrate beyond all doubt that *Paul* also based his argument in Romans on this belief. In so doing, since we have seen how fundamental are the ideas of creation and justification to the development of belief in resurrection, we will also be further confirming our conclusions regarding the centrality of *these* themes in Paul's theology. We shall not, however, discuss the situation or follow through the argument in any detail, since we consider these to be adequately covered in Chapters 2 and 3.

1:1-17

When the theme of Romans, as it is presented in 1:16f, is considered as being founded on the belief that God is him who raises the dead, it can be seen to affirm the very things the apocalyptic writers hoped for when they proposed the notion of life after physical death, and to deal with the problems which gave rise to the early germ of the notion in the Psalms, though, consistent with Paul's overall purpose, human righteousness is specifically related to faith rather than keeping the law. The gospel to which Paul refers in 1:16a is outlined in 1:3f. Combining these two statements, with 1:17a, we have the declaration that the resurrection of Jesus reveals the righteousness of God. On the one hand, God's righteousness

as faithfulness to his covenant people is demonstrated in that this man Jesus, despite remaining in close fellowship with God, and, according to tradition being innocent of any transgression, is resurrected after suffering humiliation and an early and violent death, such as only the wicked deserve. By being raised from the dead he is not only compensated for being denied a gracious death in old age, which was his due as a righteous man, but is thereby *vindicated*: his resurrection affirms *God's* acknowledgement of his righteousness during life, contradicting the charges made against him and the apparent evidence of the nature and place of his death that he was ungodly. The Jewish *hope* of resurrection as vindication, by God's keeping his covenant promise in this way, is shown by the resurrection appearances of Jesus to be not mere speculation, but firmly based in the *reality* of possibilities open to the living God, in order for him to remain true to his covenant promises in a world which acts to prevent their fulfilment on earth.

On the other hand and as suggested by the last sentence, the fact that Jesus' resurrection was made known on earth, and ongoing fellowship with him experienced, God also *vindicates himself*. He proves once and for all that he is indeed the living God who is Lord over life and death. Thus the ungodly, as well as the righteous, should now be left in no doubt as to the validity of the Jewish claim that their God is the only God, the unique giver (or withdrawer) of life. This self-vindication was, as we have seen, very much a part of the apocalyptic hope of resurrection. The expectation was that this would take place at the Day of Judgement when the New Age would be inaugurated for the righteous, and final destruction or punishment inflicted on the ungodly. Thus in the resurrection of Jesus, God reveals his own righteousness in a way not originally anticipated. Instead of instant destruction, the *ungodly* are given the knowledge, formerly confined to Judaism, which gives them a chance to see the truth of the Jewish claim, and to respond accordingly. He thereby demonstrates his will to be acknowledged by *all mankind* and not only Israel, since, from the Jewish point of view, the ungodly *were* the Gentiles, or those Jews who went over to pagan ways and so in effect became Gentiles.

Meanwhile, for the righteous the resurrection is an assurance that their hope is not in vain, nor their trust in God futile. To this extent at least they could speak of the New Age being already inaugurated, though it committed them to

continuing to struggle against evil until such time as God did totally eliminate it. In this respect there is a remarkable similarity between those who believed in the resurrection and the members of the Qumran community— both groups consider themselves already saved, participating in what could be described as *resurrection life*, while at the same time still anticipating a final end after which *only* the righteous would continue to exist. It may seem that we are reading the earlier understandings into Paul's text, without necessarily *knowing* that Paul understood resurrection in this way, even though we have suggested it is more than likely the case. Nevertheless, at this stage we can claim support for this view from the reference to Jesus being of the house of David, implying his Messiahship, the Messiah being looked to to rule Israel in the New Age.¹⁸¹ In addition, the involvement of power and the Spirit of holiness in resurrecting the dead Jesus ties in with notions of the living God who strengthens and empowers by his breath, his *rūah*. Assuming holiness can be taken to be parallel to righteousness, it would appear that the designation of the spirit in 1:4 reflects the notion that *life* and righteousness in effect amount to the same thing, as Deut 30:15-19 so clearly demonstrates (quoted p.14).

A major point, which appears to have been overlooked by the Jews Paul addresses in his letter, is that, since the resurrected, vindicated Jesus was the man said to have been condemned and put to death because Jewish justice had declared him guilty of unforgivable violation of their law, his vindication was simultaneously a condemnation of Jewish justice, radically calling into question the ability of the law to determine who was or was not righteous. A man condemned by the law was not necessarily condemned by God. So, conversely, a man found to be righteous when judged by the law would not necessarily be recognized as such by God. Although Paul does not present this implication of the gospel here, his ensuing argument, showing the righteous up for who they are, would appear to presuppose this aspect of the resurrection event and the gospel which proclaims it.

That this gospel is 'the power of God unto salvation to every one who has faith' (1:166) can again be seen to be founded on the idea of God as the one who raises the dead. To be saved is to be rescued from the realm of death, both as it encroaches on *life* and as it ultimately conquers life entirely and brings it to

an end. The rescue is executed by the inbreathing of God's life-giving spirit, the giving of power which strengthens, heals and upholds or, in other words gives *life*, thereby eliminating *death*, which is the absence of *life*.

The necessity for faith, if one is to receive this *life* and be raised from the *dead*, at first sight appears to suggest that salvation is offered as God's side of a deal: "I'll save you from death if you do what I want, which is to believe that I did this amazing thing with the man Jesus, and if you give me due homage for the rest of your life." In fact it is nothing of the kind. Rather, the role of faith is more along the lines suggested by the following illustration. A stranded mountain climber must participate in his rescue by taking hold of the rope that his rescuers throw to him and trust his life entirely to the strength of the rope and the goodwill and competence of his rescuers. He can only be rescued if he has the courage to let go of the foothold that, while giving him security, will only ensure a slow death so long as he remains there depending on them. Even though from his point of view, based on an assessment of the actual surrounding circumstances, rescue may seem hopeless, or the risks and obstacles too great and beyond his depleted physical capacity, he knows that unless he puts his whole trust and hope in the rope dangling down to him, he will die anyway.

Similarly, a *dying* man can be rescued only if he is prepared to rely on his rescuer, God, and trust his life to the gospel, the announcement that God is available with all the necessary equipment, determination, ability and previous experience to carry out the rescue. When this gospel is proclaimed, the rope is thrown, and faith is demonstrated in the taking hold of this rope, putting all one's trust in it, and thereby in the unseen rescuer above, and leaving the rest to him. As such, to take hold of the gospel is to take hold of life itself. But of course the dangling rope of the gospel is effective only if one is prepared to make use of it, depending on it, and it alone, recognising that any other alternative will sooner or later result in death. It is in this sense, then, that the gospel is 'the power of God for salvation' *only* for those who have faith.

That this salvation is available to every one, 'to the Jew first and also to the Greek', is also a claim that has its roots in earlier belief that God raises the dead. In the Pentateuch, which is primarily concerned with the history of the

establishment of Israel in the promised land, there is occasional reference to Israel's responsibility to choose the *life* God gives *so that* other nations would recognize them as exceptional. Although it is not specifically stated, admiration for Israel would amount to admiration for the God who created and sustained them. Thus Deut 32:43 says,¹⁸²

Praise his people, O you nations;
for he avenges the blood of the servants,
and takes vengeance on his adversaries
and makes expiation for the land of his people.

That this establishment of the nation is regarded as salvific action is reinforced by the statement in Deut 33:29 that Israel is 'a people saved by the Lord'.

The notion that salvation is for the Jews first, and also for Gentiles becomes much more explicit in Deutero-Isaiah, although the destruction of the latter is also frequently mentioned. The main form of expression of the belief that the non-Jewish nations will be saved, by being brought to acknowledge Israel's God as the only living God, is that they will observe God's action in saving Israel.¹⁸³ By bringing salvation to the Jews, God also makes salvation available to the Gentiles. The knowledge of God as living Lord and saviour, formerly confined to Israel¹⁸⁴, is made public. By re-establishing the nation, which under capture and in exile could be said to have been *dead*, God gives them *life*, and in so doing reveals himself as the only God capable of such action.¹⁸⁵ Other nations then will come to recognize God when *they* come under *Israel's* power, thereby being brought to shame, where shame is, as we saw above, a word which means *death*. When Israel is raised from the *dead* and strengthened to the point of being able to inflict death on other nations, it will be abundantly clear to those nations that Israel's God is a great God, that 'there is no other god besides him'¹⁸⁶, so that their salvation lies in turning to him:

Turn to me and be saved,
all the ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no other.
By myself I have sworn,
from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness

a word that shall not return:
'To me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear.' (Is 45:22f)

In addition, Israel is told to proclaim his greatness to the nations, witnessing from their own experience that he is unique¹⁸⁷, even going so far as to suggest that it was for this purpose that Israel was created.¹⁸⁸ In other words, out of all the nations cut off from him, God chose to raise Israel from the *deadas* as a means of bringing other nations to the point where *they* could likewise be raised from the dead, where clearly all that he requires of them is that they believe in him, an option opened to them once God has been revealed to them. Thus, although the proclamation of Israel's salvation, expressed by the prophet as God's desire to vindicate himself, is probably motivated by national pride in their God, Deutero-Isaiah also demonstrates that in so vindicating himself by raising the dead and showing himself to the other nations to be who Israel claimed him to be, God makes life accessible to them too:

For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it,
for how should my name be profaned?
My glory I will not give to another. (Is 48:11)

Similar views are expressed in some of the psalms. Though God's salvation is more often as much appreciated as victory over enemies, or a rather gloating anticipation of the destruction of the Gentiles,¹⁸⁹ as it is acknowledged as a means of salvation for the ungodly, it is occasionally recognized that the shaming of other nations will draw them to God.¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the beliefs that *all* nations *should* worship God¹⁹¹, and that it is Israel's task to proclaim him¹⁹² do crop up from time to time throughout. That this is a reason for God to treat Israel well, or for him having done so, is also admitted.¹⁹³ Similarly it is suggested that God ought to vindicate himself by rescuing Israel who, in its present weakness, is mocked by the other nations. Such rescue will result in God being glorified.¹⁹⁴ Thus again, even if not the prevailing view, it is affirmed that by raising Israel from the *dead*, salvation, or *life*, is also offered to the rest of the nations.

In the apocalyptic literature, the *dominant* hope is that the Gentiles will be destroyed, that God's self-vindication requires not only that dead Israelites be

given life, but that dead Gentiles be punished for their ungodliness. Self-satisfied gloating prevails over concern for world-wide recognition of God. In Wisdom 4:18-5:14 we find claims such as 'the Lord will laugh [the ungodly] to scorn' (4:18) and the ungodly, when confronted with the righteous whom they oppressed, 'will be amazed at his unexpected salvation' (5:2) and ask themselves 'why has he been numbered among the sons of God?' (5:5) and 'what has our arrogance profited us? And what good has our boasted wealth brought us?' (5:8). Similar delight in the anticipated destruction of the ungodly occurs in the Qumran and Rabbinic writings. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this view, a particular example being the one noted above, where in 2 Macc 7:37, it is assumed that the punishment of the oppressor is intended to bring him to recognize the God of the Hebrews and 'confess that he alone is God'.

From these references, especially those in Deutero-Isaiah¹⁹⁵, we conclude that Paul already regarded God's action in raising the *dead* as a means of saving not only the Jews, but through them the Gentiles. Both the remarkable achievement of those saved, and the revelation of God as a sole source of life and salvation, not only *would*, but were *actually intended* to bring the Gentiles into fellowship with God, to raise them from *death* to *life* according to the creator's purpose. Although this was very much contrary to the more widely held expectation, it is nevertheless a view which had long been present within Judaism, as Paul will demonstrate in Rom 4. We note in passing that, apart from Ps 47:9 which says, 'The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham', thereby implying *perhaps* the expectation that the nations would come to embrace Judaism, there is no mention of them coming into relationship with God by any means but faith, or of what particular requirements might be made of them in order to maintain this life-preserving relationship.

On the basis of this background, we conclude that when Paul says that salvation is 'to the Jew first' he is not only pointing to the fact that the gospel revelation has its foundation in Judaism¹⁹⁶, or that the Jews are in particular need of it¹⁹⁷, but is very likely asserting, in accordance with God's purpose in raising the dead, that it is up to the Jews to recognize and accept God's marvellous action, and then to proclaim it to the Gentiles.

If this is indeed Paul's meaning, it may be that *ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν* is a reference to this process. Deutero-Isaiah tells the people that salvation is on hand. All they need do is believe it to be the case and it will be theirs. Since it is knowledge of Israel's salvation that is to be the basis of Gentile faith, it could be said that out of Israel's faith comes Gentile faith. So too, Paul could be understood to be suggesting that the Gentiles will come to faith in the gospel which grows out of observing the consequences of Jewish faith in it.

Nonetheless, the equally ambiguous quotation of Hab 2:4b seemingly intended as support for what precedes it, is not easily fitted with the above theory. We concluded in the previous chapter that, irrespective of how one reads Hab 2:4b, it turns out that the quotation seems to confirm the assertion that, under the arrangement communicated by the gospel, salvation, either present or future, or both, is granted to those who believe this gospel.¹⁹⁸ Since salvation, as the raising of the *dead*, is ongoing only so long as the saved continues in faith, in order to remain in contact with the source of life, it could well be that by *ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν* Paul meant that *life* depends not only on the initial faith which results in one being raised from the *dead*, but also requires that this initial taking hold of salvation is maintained as *life* only so long as the hold is sustained.

Another way of saying this is to use the point Käsemann makes about righteousness: The gift is inseparable from the giver. Since the gift of *life* is given in the form of God's energizing power, it can continue as genuine *life* only so long as it remains 'plugged in' to the right power source. Only then will it keep running at full steam. It is not a gift that can be displayed in a glass case for all to admire, or pickled and presented for a prize at the village fair. In Käsemann's terms, it is not something that one can hold onto as a possession—*life* remains what it is only so long as it is constantly acted out and regularly replenished. At the very least one must use rechargeable batteries, so that even though *life* may gradually be replaced by *death*, by once again establishing contact with 'the great generator in the sky' death's encroachment can be forced back once again. This was, as we have seen, already a fundamental precept within Judaism. *Life* depended on one remaining attached to the living God, the source of life, or, if the connection was broken, renewal of *life* could come through contact being re-established.

At this level, then, the gospel says nothing that was not already known in Judaism. In the course of his argument, however, Paul shows that the gospel does propose something new. Under Judaism, one could tap the source of power only through a sort of 'extension cord'—the cult. Having initially been raised from the *dead*, the people of Israel were able to maintain their gift of *life* by obeying the law. Faith in the living God, which meant trusting him to direct all one's life, or, in other words, accepting him as Lord, was demonstrated by keeping his commandments as given by means of the written law. To submit to God's Lordship in this way was to choose *life*. This clearly contrasts with the picture presented in the early chapters of Genesis, where God makes his requirements known in direct conversation with men. Although he makes himself known to Israel through the law, there remains a considerable measure of alienation, the revelation being indirect, or, as Westermann puts it, "post-personal".¹⁹⁹

Because of God's action in raising Jesus from the dead, a much more personal means of demonstrating one's choice of *life* through ongoing faith as submission to God's Lordship becomes possible again. According to the gospel, and Paul's argument, the gift of *life* is sustained by 'plugging in' to God's son, as his representative.²⁰⁰ To accept Jesus as Lord is reckoned by God to be a satisfactory means of accepting *his* Lordship. As Paul will show later in the letter, those who put their faith in Jesus are united with him (Rom 6), and made part of his body (Rom 12:5). On this basis, we argue that *being in Christ is to be contrasted with joining in the cult*. As such, while it plays a central role in Paul's particular argument, and in christology, this notion is *derived* from his central theology, rather than *being* the centre, as Sanders argues.²⁰¹ Just as the knowledge of God as creator and as justifier are integral to Paul's understanding of the gospel, as its theological foundation, so too is the knowledge of him as raiser of the dead. Ultimately, the resurrected Jesus is important only as the one who makes it possible for man to recognize, trust and maintain their allegiance to that God whom the gospel reveals as creator, justifier and source of life.

The converse of ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ^{ἐκ πίστεως} ζήσεται is that the ungodly, who do not have faith, do *not live*. The revelation of this fact is the revelation of the wrath of God, which is the wrath of the creator and simultaneously the wrath of the righteous God who is faithful to his creation, and equally, the wrath of the living God. Those to whom he gave life have turned their backs on the source of life so that *death* has encroached on every aspect of their *lives*. Further, they have put their trust in idols which, as Deutero-Isaiah makes clear, are, themselves dead and delusions, unable to deliver, and so are in effect, the source of death, which shows itself for what it is by leading men into lives not worth living, and ultimately to physical death. Since they had been warned by God that the consequence of aiming to be independent of him was death (Gen 2:17; Rom1:32), their fate was actually self-inflicted. Since, then, all men are *dead*, to save them God must of necessity be the God who raises the dead.

Using an entirely different set of metaphors, the message and point of 1:16-32 can be paralleled with this somewhat simpler illustration.²⁰² When Eeyore's tail becomes detached from Eeyore and is attached to a bell, it may appear still to be a tail, but in reality, since it no longer functions as a tail, it has ceased to be a tail. It has become a bell-rope. It functions according to the demands made on it in its position of being attached to the bell. Further, since it is no longer attached to that which gave it life and its rightful purpose, it becomes merely an inanimate, undignified object. At the same time it leaves Eeyore looking foolish and feeling "Not very how". Even though it seems to have been more or less inevitable that such a thing *would* happen, through no fault of Eeyore's—

"You must have left it somewhere", said Winnie-the-Pooh.

"Somebody must have taken it", said Eeyore.

"How Like Them", he added, after a long silence.

—he nevertheless mourns the loss, recognising the far-reaching devastation which results—

"That Accounts for a Good Deal", said Eeyore gloomily.

"It Explains Everything. No Wonder".

While simply complaining, or demanding that the tail be returned to him would be pointless, in letting it be known how much he wants it back, and that the situation is not irreparable, he simultaneously announces that things are not as they could and should be. This, though, is the first step towards the solution of the problem. It sets in motion the means (Pooh) by which the tail can be detached from its wrongful and less than appropriate involvement, and take up its rightful place and be truly a tail again, thereby restoring Eeyore's more usual frame of mind. This action leading to the re-establishment of things as they were intended to be is very much dependent on who Eeyore is. Had he been a flesh and blood donkey such a solution would not have been possible. It is only because of his distinctive properties as a toy that the tail *could* be "nailed . . . on in its right place again" causing Eeyore "[to frisk] about the forest, waving his tail", and because of his strong positive feelings towards what was rightfully his, that the episode took place at all. After all,

"He was - he was fond of it."

"Fond of it?"

"Attached to it".

Similarly, the living God is aware that *living*, created man has been separated from him, albeit inevitably, and attached and conformed to an inanimate object, so that, despite appearances, in reality he has ceased to be man, because he cannot function as a living being in isolation from that which gives him *life*, or without fulfilling his function of serving this source, namely, God. At the same time God is left looking less of a God than he actually is, and is not content with the thwarting of his intention. By announcing in the gospel his willingness and ability to rectify the situation, he simultaneously reveals what the situation is, compared with what it could and should be, and sets in motion the means (faith) by which it is to be rectified. Restoration of the intended attachment between man and God is possible only because of who God is. Had he been an idol nothing could have been done. It is because of his distinctive ability to raise the dead that man *can* be "nailed . . . on in [his] right place again", and because of

his strong positive feelings for his creation that this move to re-establish contact is made at all.

Chapters 2-16

From the preceding discussion of Rom 1 it should be clear that all the issues Paul discusses throughout the remainder of the epistle can be derived from the declaration that God is he who gives life to the dead, that the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel is that he raises from the dead those who have faith.

Romans 2 and 3 elaborate the point that the law is not the measure of whether a Jew is to be judged righteous. Eternal life is granted not for obedience to the law but for the faith which, by obedience, acknowledges God's Lordship. One's adherence to the law is relevant for the judgement of works, but has no part in the ultimate life and death decision. This is clear because even the righteous fail in their efforts to keep the law, yet God remains faithful to his people. This is demonstrated by the resurrection of Jesus which assures the faithful that their hoped for reward is a genuine hope, and that God is who he claims to be and able to carry out this promise (3:26).

The law, on the other hand, should have enabled the Jews to witness to the greatness of their saving God, in order to win the Gentiles (3:19), since they also come under his jurisdiction (3:29). But now, through raising Jesus, God has demonstrated his power *directly* to the Gentiles, so the law's function has been superseded. That is not to say that those who express their faith through the law must give it up. They only need realize that it is faith and not the law that is the criterion for being raised, and that adherence to the law serves no function at all for Gentile believers, any more than it did for Abraham, who responded directly to God's promise of life independently of the law (Rom 4). God's faithfulness to his people does not depend on their action but is maintained because he chose them for his own sake (3:3f).

Because of this, now both Jews and Gentiles, having been raised from the dead, can be confident of ultimate salvation, irrespective of how they might behave, so

long as they maintain faith (ch.5). This is not to say believers should deliberately sin, since they are already saved, and have the necessary means to live accordingly, whereas to continue to sin is to run the risk of falling back under the power of sin or, in other words, into *death* (ch.6). Similarly, Jews ought not to continue regarding the law as all important because if the law rules them then God does not and they equally fall into the danger of being cut off from the source of life and falling (back) into *death* (ch.7).

On the other hand, if one remains open to Jesus Christ, thus retaining allegiance to God, God's life-giving Spirit received thereby counteracts the natural tendency to sin and *death*. Those who are raised from the dead are, as is demonstrated by the raising of Jesus, sons of God. As such, nothing can destroy them, and eventually the whole process of renewal of life will be brought to completion and the whole world will *live* once more. Believers can be certain of this because of God's absolute and indefatigable attachment, demonstrated in what he has already done for believers and promised to bring to completion, and indisputably within his ability as he proved by raising Jesus. In other words, believers can confidently trust God because his faithful love for his creation has already shown itself to be more powerful than the powers of sin and death which rule those who turn their backs on him (ch.8).

Romans 9-11 argue that, despite appearances, the same is true for the Jews who do not yet recognize or acknowledge God's action in raising Jesus. In time they too will be raised from the *death* they unknowingly live out. In fact it is probably because of their blindness that the Gentiles have been raised ahead of them. This means that the Gentiles should not gloat over them, as if God had abandoned his love for them, but rather should use their privilege to witness to these Jews, thus reversing the roles of the two groups prior to Christ's death and resurrection.

Romans 12ff then spell out positively, the sort of behaviour believers should follow in order to continue in faith and live out the *life* granted them, as chaps. 6-8 warned them they should and could.

Conclusion

All these points were touched upon in the more detailed discussion of Rom 1. We therefore maintain that it has been shown conclusively that the belief that God is he who raises the dead is central to the whole of Romans. Since this notion can be substituted for either the notion that God is he who creates *ex nihilo* or the notion that God is he who justifies the ungodly, we equally affirm the synonymity of these three expressions, and the inner coherence and outer unity of the Epistle to the Romans.

Chapter 5

Summary and Conclusions

1. Käsemann's *Commentary on Romans* is a remarkable piece of scholarship. While much that Käsemann does and says is not original to him, the way he brings a variety of emphases together is unique. Recognising both the value and the limitations of the various methodological approaches advocated by his predecessors, he supplements his concentration on Paul's thought and the unity of the epistle with relevant findings from history of religions and philological research and with extensive reference to other writers, producing an interpretation which is at one and the same time historical-critical, theological and evangelical. No other scholar has succeeded in combining these three basic approaches into a unified whole as Käsemann has done. Very few have even attempted such a monumental task.

Of these methodological features, it has been stressed that Käsemann's primary concern and contribution is that he interprets Paul *theologically*. He uses historical criticism as an instrument for ascertaining the theological content, which in turn provides the basis for his evangelical message. In particular, while Käsemann, like most commentators, takes the theme of the epistle to be Rom 1:16,17:

for I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live',

by *going behind* this to isolate and emphasize Paul's basic depiction of God, Käsemann is able clearly to establish the unity of the whole epistle. In other words, by highlighting what the righteousness of God reveals about who God is, defined in terms of the way he acts, Käsemann is able to relate to the *theme of the righteousness of God, as righteousness of faith*, passages which at first sight appear to have little or nothing to do with righteousness, thus demonstrating an *underlying unity* which most commentators are unable to find. Even those, like Luther, who argue that the righteousness of God is the theme throughout, have not demonstrated this as effectively as Käsemann has. On these grounds we have argued that Käsemann's highlighting of Paul's picture of God is a distinctive feature of the commentary.

Paul's God, to whom Käsemann draws attention, is explicitly described in Rom 4 as 'him who justifies the ungodly' (4:5), 'who gives life to the dead' (4:17) and who 'calls into existence the things that do not exist' (4:17) or, in short, who creates out of nothing. Since these are Paul's own words, and are independent of any particular interpretation of the historical situation or the argument in Romans, they can be accepted as *his* understanding. While the meaning conveyed to modern readers by these statements, or their appropriate application in the present, may be open to speculation, opinion or dispute, these questions are beyond the scope of this thesis. *At the level of Paul's language and logic* it is beyond dispute that the above-quoted clauses define the God in whom Paul, following in the footsteps of Abraham, believed. It would also seem to be indisputable that *the whole of Paul's theology must be derived from, and consistent with, his view of God.*¹ Consequently, we have maintained that, in highlighting these statements, Käsemann *points out incontrovertible keys and benchmarks for the interpretation of Romans*, and Pauline theology, thereby adding support to the claim that this aspect of his commentary makes a particularly distinctive contribution to this area of scholarship.

Finally we have claimed that the most distinctive aspect of Käsemann's presentation of Paul's definitions of God is that he asserts not only their centrality in Paul's theology, but their equivalence to each other. Rather than being an indication of three different ways or even three interdependent modes of operation, in which God operates, they represent three alternative ways of putting into

words a single affirmation. They are interchangeable models or metaphors which describe God as man's rescuer where any one metaphor may be chosen according to the field of language that might seem most suited to the discussion of a particular issue or the solution of a particular problem. If this is correct, any one of these statements could be said to be the centre of Paul's theology, the keys and benchmarks mentioned above being superimposed, forming a single key and benchmark.

Käsemann is of the opinion that, as apostle to the Gentiles, Paul gives particular emphasis in all his writing to the notion that God justifies the ungodly as the centre of his theology, since this is the picture best suited to his work with Gentiles. Käsemann attributes this particular concept to Paul himself so that the gospel of the righteousness of faith is Paul's own development or sharpening of the proclamation of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The statement of the theme (1:16-17) confirms that Paul in Romans does indeed focus on language associated with his view of God as justifier of the ungodly. Since this study does not extend beyond Romans, it is not appropriate to express an opinion about Paul's writing in general. Nevertheless, it is argued, on the basis of the interpretation of Romans in the preceding chapters, that Paul chose his field of language on the basis of the main problem he was addressing. Further, in view of the discussion of background material, particularly regarding resurrection, it is maintained that, rather than presenting a new development, Paul is in fact going over the basic assumptions and meaning of resurrection already familiar to the Jews. In conclusion then, the study affirms that the image of God as 'him who justifies the ungodly' does play a central role in Romans, but not necessarily for the reason Käsemann suggests, nor as a notion original to Paul.²

By expressing the centrality of the doctrine of justification by faith in terms of who God is, so that this action is seen in the first instance as the exercising of God's will to bring about *his* purpose, Käsemann raises it above 'mere Lutheranism', thereby countering much criticism of interpretations which find justification by faith to be central.³ By claiming that righteousness by faith is an alternative, equivalent statement of the gospel of resurrection Käsemann also stands out from the majority of commentators who tend to con-

sider justification by faith to be a consequence of Jesus' death and resurrection. This not only marks another way in which Käsemann's contribution is distinctive, but also refutes claims that the doctrine of justification is particular, and so peripheral rather than central. Thus, it has been suggested that Käsemann's focussing on Paul's designations of God as him who justifies the ungodly, raises the dead, and creates out of nothing, as central and equivalent themes in Romans, demands further investigation not only because it attracts interest by being new and distinctive compared with other commentaries, but also because it promises clarification on such issues as the centre of Paul's theology and the unity of the epistle and, if verifiable, a key to, and criterion for, assessing interpretation. In addition, if Käsemann can be shown to be correct, these equivalent statements, allowing for choice of language in the expression of the gospel, can, as statements about God rather than man, presumably be regarded as having present day significance, irrespective of one's opinion about the universality of Paul's argument as a whole.

2. The bulk of this study has been *an investigation of each of the three themes Käsemann highlights for the purpose of evaluating his claim that they are equivalent, central and unifying in Paul's theology*. This task has largely been limited to the level of drawing attention to *associations and logical inter-relatedness* of concepts simply on the basis of their occurrence and use in discussions and arguments and not on the basis of research into meaning beyond what became apparent through cross-referencing. In this respect what we have done is more like a series of algebraic manoeuvres or operations, carried out in order to present the information given in the simplest or most concise form, independent of meaning. Then when meaningful content is given to the symbols the overall message can be ascertained with a minimum of effort and error. So the investigation conducted herewith is intended as *a preliminary step to interpretation of meaning*. By establishing that Käsemann's concise statement of Paul's theology can be upheld, the foundation is laid for an intermediative approach whereby working with the meaning of the three designations of God, and from these to related themes, according to the logical structure, effort and error in interpretation should be minimised.

(a) The investigation of each of the themes individually has built up a picture

of their use which shows that they are indeed *equivalent*, both in earlier Jewish writings and in Romans. There is one particular factor which makes especially clear the equivalence of these seemingly separate images of God and the way he acts and hence of the status of a person and of persons in the believing community, as described in the context of this framework. This is that each of the three sets of cognate words or expressions are used in two senses: they are used to refer both to the decisive events at the extreme limits of human earthly existence, and to the quality of that existence, as it is determined by God, and as an indication of personal or community standing in relation to God. These could be regarded as 'actual' and 'metaphorical' uses, where the 'metaphorical' relates to what God intended should result from the decisive, 'actual' actions.⁴

For example, when God created the earth and the various beings, it was his intention that they should recognize themselves as *his* creation, *his* creatures. Thus a distinction is drawn between the 'actual' creation and intended *creatureliness*. The intention was that *creatures* should recognise and accept that they stood under God and so act according to his expressed will. In contrast, created beings refused to obey God's will, thereby demonstrating their refusal to accept that they stood under him, instead regarding themselves as his equal or superior, and denying their creaturely nature. While they remain creatures in the 'actual' sense, in God's eyes they are *nothing*, 'metaphorically' *non-existent*. Similarly, and by the same criterion, all living beings may be *alive* or *dead*. Under the covenant with Israel, which establishes a righteous people, again depending on the national or individual's willingness to stand under God and obey his will, the nation or members of it may be *righteous* or *ungodly*. Under the *new* covenant these 'metaphorical' categories become applicable to all mankind. That *creatureliness*, *righteousness* and *life* are all terms used to describe the status of those who obey God's will, in recognition that they stand under him, is one indication that these notions are understood as *parallel statements* of the one underlying fact, and hence may be regarded as equivalent.

The parallelism indicating equivalence of these three sets of cognate expressions has also been demonstrated through points where one is used to define or describe another. An example of this which has been discussed is Deut 30:15-19: To accept God as Lord is to obey his commandments. To do this is *righteousness*. At the

same time, to do this is to choose *life*. To ignore the commandments is to turn one's back on God, to be *unrighteous*, or to choose *death*. Further, to be created is to be given life, to be raised from the dead is to be justified. The gospel which proclaims the resurrection of Jesus is simultaneously the gospel which proclaims the righteousness of God. Man's *unrighteousness* is his refusal to acknowledge the creator. These and similar examples have all come to light in the course of investigating the themes separately. It is simply not possible properly to speak of any one in total isolation from the others.

The equivalence of these concepts as *concurrent revelations* has also gradually emerged in the course of the investigation of each individually. It has been pointed out that the creation stories were written as proleptic accounts of Israel's experience of God in her history. As such, it is reasonable to assume that what is included there must reflect the storytellers' perception of life in their own time. This mythical beginning of Israel's salvation history speaks of God creating man, giving him life—both 'actual' and 'metaphorical'—and giving a commandment to be obeyed, i.e., a means of demonstrating *righteousness*. Disobedience resulted in the ending of *life* as it was intended, though not 'actual' life in the first instance and, conversely, the beginning of *death* leading to 'actual' death. Thus it was taken to be the case that from the very first Yahweh, the creator God, as giver or destroyer of life, was God of life, who, in making his promise and establishing his claim to acknowledgment, had revealed himself as a righteous God. At the same time it is made clear that man as he was intended to be would accept the promise and submit to the claim and accordingly be a true *creature*, a *living, righteous* being.

It may be surmised that it was the experience that all men die and that life at best is not easy, and could at times be downright difficult, in particular at the hands of one's fellowmen, that was intended to be explained in terms of the *unrighteousness* of Adam. By transgressing the one command given him, he challenged the claim of the creator and became as *nothing*. Alternatively, he challenged the claim of the God of life so that *life* was withdrawn, or, he challenged the claim of the righteous God and the promised fullness of life in companionship with God was denied him and, being thus alienated from God, he was rendered *ungodly*. This status was passed on to all his descendants, to all

mankind. This punishment of man reveals negatively the concurrency of creation, righteousness and the giving of life. The man alienated from God is concurrently shown to be *non-existent*, *ungodly* and *dead* in the eyes of God.

It has been pointed out in this study that Adam's punishment, and parallel punishments throughout Israel's history, are self-defeating for God. The punishment makes it impossible for his claim to be met or his intention for creation to be carried out. So it becomes Israel's experience, and eventually her confident conviction, that God chooses to break through the limitations of normal justice, that counters crime with punishment, and to establish a sort of unwritten constitution in which priority is given to re-establishing the possibility of his claim being submitted to, and his will for his creation being realized. In other words, he makes it possible for the *dead*, *non-existent*, and/or *ungodly* to be as he wishes by *raising the dead*, *bringing the non-existent into existence*, and/or *justifying the ungodly*. This he does by breaking through the barrier of alienation and addressing men with a call to them to return or come into relationship with him, promising the maintenance of the relationship and all that goes with it and claiming human submission to him through obedience to what he asks of them.

There has been a number of obvious examples of this contradictory action of God in the material studied. Although the full picture is not always given due to the step by step approach of discussing the themes separately, the sum result of the studies has nevertheless thrown additional light on passages that seem to focus on one particular theme. For example, it was noted that Deutero-Isaiah made frequent reference to the divine establishment of the Hebrew nation as an act of creation out of nothing. Traditions which regard Abraham as the founder of the nation present him as an ungodly man called and given instructions and promises by God. He demonstrated his willingness to submit himself to God, thereby acknowledging God's right over him, and his trust that God would carry out his side of the bargain, even though common sense indicated the absurdity of the promises. He was promised prosperity and land even though he had set off into the unknown, leaving behind all reasonable hope of attaining these. For the Israelite, a prosperous, secure agricultural life *was life*—the fullness of life and peaceful existence for which *life* was the metaphor. And he was promised descendants even though his wife was beyond child-bearing age. At the time

the story was recorded, offspring were seen to provide one with the means of living on after death, of a sort of immortality. Finally, Abraham's willingness to put himself entirely into God's hands believing that God would be faithful to his promise of life in these two respects was reckoned to him as righteousness. Thus, in establishing the nation, God simultaneously revealed himself as one who creates out of nothing, gives life to the dead and justifies the ungodly.

A similar analysis of the story of the exodus from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the wanderings in the wilderness, leading to the creation of a nation of people righteous in the eyes of God and enjoying fullness of life, would likewise show this act of salvation to reveal God at one and the same time as creator out of nothing, raiser of the dead, and justifier of the ungodly. Further, discussion of the apocalyptic hope of resurrection has shown this hope to be based entirely on belief in God who, as him who creates out of nothing, and justifies the ungodly,⁵ is the one who gives and withdraws life, his action in raising Jesus from the dead simultaneously revealing that he is indeed equally well described by each of these designations. Since resurrection is regarded as an 'actual', decisive act which will re-create a man, giving him some sort of body, and restoring him to some sort of life, thereby declaring him to be righteous, it has been shown that such an act cannot be regarded otherwise than as indisputable evidence that the three designations of God were equivalent within Judaism.

That Paul inherited this view of God would seem to be self-evident. That he was a Pharisee further supports this contention, since this group of Jews are said to have believed in resurrection. Certainly Paul came to a point where he began to believe in Jesus' resurrection. In addition he demonstrates particular familiarity with and favour for Deutero-Isaiah from which he quotes frequently in Romans. The investigation has shown that, in predicting salvation, the prophet more or less arbitrarily oscillated between describing this anticipated divine action as creation out of nothing, justification of the ungodly, or the raising of the dead. Finally, Paul, in Rom 4 indicates an understanding of the Abraham story in the terms described, actually using the terms in parallel to speak of the God in whom Abraham believed, and in Rom 1 speaks of the gospel telling of God's having raised Jesus from the dead as revealing God's righteousness, and immediately goes on to define righteousness in terms of God's claim on mankind as creator.

Other indications of Paul's understanding of his designations of God as being equivalent will be discussed in the next section.

In conclusion, on the basis of the study of each of the notions that God is 'he who justifies the ungodly', 'who gives life to the dead' and who 'calls into existence the things that do not exist', the main results of which are outlined above, it has been substantiated that Käsemann is correct in his assertion that the statements are equivalent, in that they are parallel definitions of God concurrently revealed in single events within salvation history.

(b) Verification of the centrality of Paul's view of God in the theology of Romans has been obtained by testing the epistle against each of the themes in turn. Throughout the epistle, attention was drawn to occurrences of the theme in question, or to other theological themes which could be seen to be specifically derived or inferred from the theme in question, or cognate words or expressions, on the basis of the understanding, obtained from the background material, of logical connections in the epistle itself. It was found that in each case virtually the whole epistle could be seen to relate quite clearly to the theme in question. Where this was not immediately obvious, connection could be established through one of the equivalent themes. It was thereby demonstrated that no theological theme in the epistle was entirely independent of Paul's three equivalent designations of God.

A few examples should suffice as a summary demonstration of this finding. The resurrection of Jesus (1:4) is obviously brought about by the action of the God who raises the dead. This action is executed by the Spirit, the power by which God creates living beings. It establishes Sonship—a close relationship to God, implying this person, who was condemned to death because, according to the law, he was ungodly, was reckoned by God to be righteous. This event also reveals the righteousness of God (1:17), as his faithful keeping of his promise to one who trusted and obeyed him to the point of being put to death, and as his claim demanding faithful obedience rather than superficial obedience, i.e. the mere keeping of legal precepts or cultic declaration of intention to obey the law. As an event which takes place outwith Judaism and the cult, it reveals God's righteousness to Gentiles as well as to Jews, and so reveals the promise and the

claim of the God of the whole world, the creator. The promise is life, the claim is that man be righteous, that is, that he acknowledge the creator by being obedient to the creator's requirement that he put his faith in him.

The power of God (1:16), according to the Old Testament, is the breath (*rūah*) or spirit of God by which he creates and gives life. According to Paul, it is the power by which God makes man righteous, that is, the power by which he justifies and gives life, and it is the glory of God as creator and as raiser of the dead (1:23; 6:4). In short, then, it is the power by which God brings about the salvation of men, whether one chooses to speak of this as justification, resurrection or creation.

Ungodliness (1:18) is the suppression or denial of the truth that God is the creator who has power (cf. above) and deity, and glory, and is, accordingly, to be honoured, thanked, worshipped, served, and/or acknowledged. It is man's false claim to wisdom. Since it has been shown that Proverbs and the Qumran hymns equate knowledge of God and his requirements with *life*, *righteousness* and *being created*, this description of ungodliness as false wisdom is equally a description of *death* or of *nothingness*. Also, of course, denial that God is to be worshipped, etc., is a denial of his claim which results in the withdrawal of *life* and the encroachment of *death*, which the study of background material has shown to be evidenced by a less than desirable way of life, such as Paul described. In the course of the investigation it has also been noted that those who turn from God to idols are turning from *life* to *death*, from the living God who has power to save, to illusory or dead gods that are powerless to save, and/or from *righteousness* to sinfulness.

Judgement (2:1) is the determination of whether or not a person is *righteous*, and therefore is *alive* or *dead* in the 'metaphorical' sense, or will live or die in the 'actual' sense of what decision will be taken regarding his fate after physical death, where the *righteous* are those who live in obedient, submissive relationship to God, thereby giving him the acknowledgement he demands.

Grace (5:2) is God's generosity towards man in treating him in direct contradiction to his deserving and to the usual demands of a normal system of justice, i.e.,

in justifying him although he is guilty, in giving him *life* (alternatively described as peace, 5:1) when he deserves to die (1:32).

Reconciliation (5:11) is the re-establishment of the broken relationship with God and hence the re-creation of man as a *living, righteous* being, willing to submit himself to whatever God may require of him, this reconciliation being made possible by God's revelation of himself, his claim and his promise.

Glory (6:4) is the power by which God raises the dead (cf. 1:23). It is an attribute by which God is distinguished from idols, namely, that he is the source and controller of that power by which the world was created and given life (Is 40:12-20) *et passim*). To give glory to God (16:27) is to acknowledge this fact, recognising the claim it makes as well as the transformation it brings about simultaneously with this acknowledgement.

Circumcision is the physical sign denoting a man's membership of Israel, the people of God whom he created and to whom he gave life and righteousness. This sign was taken in later Judaism to be an essential requirement for being resurrected, and at the same time, a guarantee that those who bore it would be resurrected (subject to a small number of other restrictions). Paul, on the other hand, argues that the death and resurrection of Jesus has demonstrated that circumcision, along with possession of the law, is irrelevant as far as *God's* judgement of righteousness is concerned, and so is useless and outdated as a guarantee or determining factor in the selection of who would receive life after death, unless it was backed up by the submissive, worshipping, serving attitude to God that it was designed to signify, that is, unless it was in fact evidence of *righteousness, life and/or creatureliness*.

Being-in-Christ is the means by which the newly established relationship with God is maintained. It enables a believer to remain a new *creature, righteous* and *alive*. A person is incorporated in Christ's body through the adoption of faith, which signifies death to sin and rising to *righteousness* or *life*, as symbolised by baptism. Those who are in Christ continue to receive the power of God's spirit and demonstrate their submission to God by submitting to his Son, doing God's will as communicated by the Son. In other words, being in Christ takes the place

in Paul's thinking that was assigned to the nation and the cult, including the law and circumcision, in orthodox Judaism.

The picture of God, his actions and his requirement, established in the preceding chapters and outlined here, also demonstrates the suitability of some of Käsemann's particular expressions. The living God has life, which is power, which he gives to man, and continues to do so, as long as man remains in relationship with him. Alternatively, the creator God empowers his creation by breathing his breath into the living creatures. Since the same action must be describable as that of the righteous God, in view of the equivalence of these designations of God, it follows that Käsemann's description of righteousness as power which he deduces from Rom 1:16, is supported by this alternative reasoning. Since the state of mankind is such that life and/or righteousness are not deserved but given as a gift of grace, and maintained only while the relationship desired by God remains unbroken, it likewise follows that Käsemann has correctly captured the essence of the arrangement by declaring that the gift is inseparable from the Giver.

Another favourite theme of Käsemann's is **Lordship**, and the idea that man is *always* under the Lordship of one God or another. To be under Lordship is to behave towards one's Lord in the way that is negatively expressed in the description of man's attitude to the creator in Rom 1:18-32. It is to worship, serve and rely on one's Lord, submitting to him in obedience to his requirements. Pauls makes it clear, as does Deutero-Isaiah, that there are basically only two options: to accept the Lordship of Yahweh or to turn and submit oneself to idols. Either way, one is conformed to one's chosen Lord. Yahweh's people are true *creatures, alive, righteous*. Idol worshippers are *nothing, dead, ungodly*. Similarly, it can be said that it is because the creation is under the dominion of unrighteous man that it could be said to be dying in conformity with the lord set over it (Rom 8:19-23).

In conclusion, it is herein affirmed that Käsemann's view of Paul's theology is consistent with the themes he highlights as central to it. More importantly, on the basis of the study of each of the notions that God is 'he who justifies the ungodly', 'who gives life to the dead' and 'who calls into existence the things that

do not exist', as they occur in Romans, and, as illustrated by the above examples, we maintain that it has been substantiated that Käsemann is correct in his assertion that the statements are central, in that all other theological themes in the epistle are subordinate statements specifically related to these three equivalent themes.

(c) Since the centrality of Paul's parallel pictures of God, as the logical source of all other Pauline concepts, has been demonstrated, it is self-evident that the theological points Paul makes in Romans will have the unity and coherence that a common axiomatic presupposition inevitably gives. Nevertheless, it has been shown that the unity of the epistle is not just the underlying canvas, forming the hidden structure and foundation of the scene depicted in Romans, but that in this epistle the central axiom itself is the foreground subject determining the shape and content of the whole landscape—or more to the point, 'Godscape.' Further, the composition is such that, in the first instance, the mind's eye is drawn to the representation of God as 'him who justifies the ungodly.' Complementary touches of 'him who creates out of nothing' and 'him who raises the dead' give this central subject its full, three dimensional quality, determining the perspective in which all the surrounding details are placed, and are seen at the same time to complement and throw attention back to the central figure.

In other words, on the basis of the study, it is maintained that the theme announced in Rom 1:16,17 is indeed the theme which runs through and shapes the whole epistle, where this theme is directly founded on Paul's perception of God as justifier of the ungodly, the full content and significance of this being brought out by the affirmation that to say this is equally to say that God is creator *ex nihilo* and raiser of the dead. More importantly, elaboration of this theme, being, as it is, based on Paul's threefold designation of God, is, at one and the same time, an elaboration of Paul's view of God, with special emphasis being placed on that aspect which highlights his activity of justifying the ungodly.

The role of Paul's designation of God becomes clear when 1:16,17 is paraphrased as follows: The gospel, as the revelation of God's righteousness, or, in other words, of the behaviour of God appropriate to his relationship

with man, is his power which effects the salvation of all who believe the revelation to be true. Since Paul's designations of who God *is* are given in terms of how he behaves, it could equally be said that the gospel, *in announcing who God is*, is the power which effects the salvation of believers. From the Old Testament it has been shown that salvation can equally be regarded as receiving *life*, being *created* or being *justified*. That Paul has this sort of notion in mind is confirmed by the scriptural quotation, 'He who is righteous by faith will live.' Conversely, those in need of salvation are *dead, nothing, ungodly*. They have no contribution of their own to make. All they can do is believe that God will save them.

Further confirmation of this lies in the reference to power which has been shown to mean God's creative breath, that which gives life, and, parallelling these, that which makes man righteous. When man receives life, is created or is justified he receives the gift of God's life-giving, creative, justifying power, thereby becoming *alive, a creature, righteous*. He remains such so long as he remains linked to the source of power by continuing to have faith in it, that is, in God. Finally, the gospel expressed in terms of resurrection (1:3,4) has been shown to reveal God's righteousness in that by raising Jesus he clarifies his criterion for reckoning a person righteous and vindicates himself by giving life to this righteous one, in accordance with his promise. In other words, he demonstrates that he does behave in a manner appropriate to his relationship with man, simultaneously revealing what he considered to be appropriate behaviour for man in relationship with him. Since this is faith, clearly shown to be quite separate from Judaism and the law, he further reveals himself as a God whose righteous behaviour is exercised to all mankind, whom he created. Understood in light of these implications, it is clear that 1:16,17 is not only the *theme*, but also a *summary* of the theology Paul goes on to spell out.

That Paul's argument is a logically coherent discussion, unified by the theme of the revelation to those who have faith of the righteousness of the God who justifies the ungodly, is demonstrated in the following outline of the results of the more detailed investigation in Chapters 2-4 above.

1:18-3:18

Paul begins the elaboration of the theme by showing that God must be one who justifies the ungodly, and therefore that righteousness must be by faith, if *anyone* is to be saved, because all men have violated their rightful relationship with God, none have behaved appropriately towards him, either as creator or as the righteous God of Israel. Although under both categories there have been some who have strived to be righteous, all have fallen short at one time or another. In addition, of the Israelites who had been established as a righteous nation those who assumed that belonging to the nation automatically entitled them to the benefits of God's righteousness even though they did not maintain theirs, are shown to be no different from Gentiles who had never received the gift of righteousness. Therefore all men, one way or another, are demonstrably ungodly, so *they can be justified only by a God who justifies the ungodly*. righteousness can be attributed to them only if this God imparts to them his creative, life-giving, justifying power. Conversely, God can behave appropriately, in accordance with his purpose as creator, giving life to his creatures, only if he justifies the ungodly, since only the *righteous* live as true creatures.

3:19-4:25

It was always God's intention that his righteousness be visible to all mankind, so that justification by faith would be an option for all the ungodly, Jews and Gentiles alike.

The law was given for this purpose but this failed because the law was substituted for God as determiner of existence, so in effect the law was made an idol and consequently led to sin rather than being used to demonstrate God's righteousness to outside observers of the wonders God worked for his faithful people, especially the peaceful and prosperous co-existence of the Jewish people that faithful obedience to God's law would have effected.

So now God's righteousness has been alternatively revealed through Jesus Christ,

so that it is indisputably a gift for all who have faith and cannot be mistakenly thought to be a right or a reward for obedience to the law. The resurrection of Jesus vindicates God, revealing him to be who he is, namely, the God who justifies the ungodly, and simultaneously revealing what is required of men if they are to be judged righteous in God's eyes. Jesus was condemned by the law, being crucified outside the city of Jerusalem, thereby being treated as if he were not a Jew at all. Hence his resurrection demonstrates that God's promise of life to the righteous is independent of the law and Judaism. Rather, Jesus is justified because he was faithful to God. This makes sense, since *the whole of mankind*, and not only the Jews, *is dependent on God for its existence and life*. The message given through the proclamation of this event is precisely the same as that which is given in the story of the foundation of Israel through the calling and blessing of Abraham. The law and circumcision were given as signs witnessing to God's righteousness as justification of the ungodly, subsequent to, and quite independent of Abraham's justification, of the faith that made him righteous in God's eyes.

5:1-8:39

The revelation of God's righteousness, showing him to be the God who justifies the ungodly, so that those who have faith in the gospel concerning Jesus Christ are justified, means that those justified need no longer be threatened with the fear of death. The relationship with the source of *life* has been re-established, the *death*-giving enmity being replaced with love through reconciliation. Therefore, although *death* still rears its ugly head, continuing to encroach on the *lives* of believers it is counterbalanced and driven back by the gift of God's holy Spirit, his power of life given to those who believe the gospel revelation of his righteousness. The very fact that God should have devised a means, so costly to himself, of rescuing the ungodly, those who had rejected him, provides the assurance that he will bring to completion what he has begun. Believers can rely on him, building on him their hope of ultimately being justified and raised, and thereby escaping death's final victory over them because they believe in God's righteousness.

In establishing once and for all, through Jesus Christ, that God justifies the ungodly, revealing this in a way that does not *lead* man into sin as the law did, death is shown to be defeated, its present encroachment being no more than its last death throes. It is defeated because, through justification, it is driven out of the ungodly, in whom it reigns, by the influx of *life*. The more the ungodly sin, the more death encroaches, and so the more the life that is graciously given in the justification of the ungodly.

This does not mean that one should continue to sin in order to receive even more of the gift of life. This would be a contradiction of the affirmation of faith in God's righteous justification. Just as being cut off from God is to *die*, so one can speak of turning one's back on sin as *dying to sin*. To deliberately continue to sin is to deny that one has turned away from it to faith in Christ, by which one is identified with him in such a way that one can be said to have gone through what he went through, an identification symbolised by baptism. This being the case, such believers ought also to identify with him in living a life which is demonstrably righteous, a life which points to God and so witness to his righteousness, shutting out all that would seem to deny it, just as Christ does in his resurrected life. This is not only for God's sake, but because by sinning one runs the danger of returning to idolising commandments rather than giving glory to God, and so of falling prey to death once more. On the other hand, if one's orientation is towards righteousness, even though one may fall into sin, this will happen less frequently as death is driven back by the spirit, so that one becomes more and more faithful to God's requirements revealed along with his promise of life, together constituting his righteousness. This sanctification is to be valued as facilitating a life which is less and less disrupted by what is undesirable, that is, by *death*, thereby demonstrating God's righteousness ever more effectively, and leading to eternal, sin-free life with God.

Consistent with this is a particular message to the Jews. Since the law leads one into sin, into becoming that which one strives to obey, instead of being recognised as the means of faithful obedience to *God*, as witnesses to his righteousness, dying to sin means dying also to the law. Instead of placing oneself under the law, one ought to place oneself under Christ in order to be effective witness to God. *Keeping the law was not an effective witness because by increasing*

sinfulness, it actually witnessed against God. Not that this was a fault of the law, which was given with the best of intentions, but the fault of its adherents, in that, inexplicably, it gave them the option of sinning, and despite their sincere intentions, inevitably seemed to lead them to sin. This, at least, was Paul's experience. In view of 1:18ff, it must be assumed that by putting themselves under the law, they were no longer under God, since one always has only one Lord, and so were cut off from his righteousness and life, the "space" left by their withdrawal being filled by sin and *death*. Therefore, the law proved to be not only ineffective as a witness to God's righteousness, but went so far as to witness against him, since onlookers would see that his people were *ungodly*, *dead*, as *nothing*, and conclude that their God must be weak and helpless. Consequently, the Israelites faced condemnation.

On the other hand, with the advent of the gospel, there is now no danger of this happening. For God has manifested his righteousness by his own action in Christ, and subsequently by giving his Spirit to those who, as believers, are identified with Christ to the extent that they are said to be in him. And, as the faithful Son, Jesus, has God's creative, life-giving power as righteousness, thereby witnessing to God's righteous condemnation of the sin which overtakes ordinary human beings who of themselves are powerless to counteract it, so those who through him receive God's power, which displaces the power of sin, can counteract their natural instinct to choose sin and come to act in harmony with the indwelling power, eliminating what is undesirable and so not falling prey to sin again. Those who continue to be determined by the Spirit are, like Jesus, sons of God whose righteousness will be confirmed when they are raised and empowered as he was, even though meanwhile they may suffer as he did, at the hands of those who reject the gospel.

Paul's call, then is that believers should continue to place their confidence in the God who justifies the ungodly and raises the dead. For this is also to be faithful to the creator God, whose whole creation suffers under the dominion of the ungodly, longing for the time when all men will see and believe in the God who justifies the ungodly, and so become faithful servants and stewards, as his sons. Then, believing in his righteousness and assisted by his power, they can

endure anything, and wait patiently knowing that the God who gives his Son in order to secure the salvation of ungodly men, can be trusted to continue to demonstrate his righteousness by giving *life to the dead*, and ultimately raising the dead to life, in accordance with his love for his creation.

9:1-11:36

Despite all this, there is an inexplicable aspect to God's revelation of his righteousness. Now, as in Old Testament times, he is selective, on a seemingly arbitrary basis, in choosing whom he will equip to witness to him. In this instance, it is the majority of the Jews who remain deaf to his message. In view of all his involvement with the Israelites in the past, and his efforts to reshape them according to his wishes, it is strange and frustrating to Paul, that they should now appear to be abandoned, even though it is their failure to hear that is to blame. Although God has not acted to *force* them to believe, it has always been his prerogative to choose his own means of executing his will. So if he should choose to use the Gentiles to witness to his righteousness to the Jews, rather than the reverse, as had been customary, the Jews had no leg to stand on, since they had failed to take up the opportunity open to them to be God's special people, called for the purpose of demonstrating him to be the God he was. This was not so much deliberate rebellion as the sort of mistaken allegiance to the law rather than God, of which Paul knew himself to have been guilty, despite zeal for God. So it is Paul's hope that since God's righteousness is now manifested *apart from the law*, they may come to recognise, through faith in Christ, the true nature of God's righteousness as *justification of the ungodly*. For this option is as open to them as it is to the Gentiles, and so it is important to persist in preaching the gospel to them, even though it does now fall on deaf ears. That some Jews, including Paul himself, have come to faith, through no credit of their own, is evidence that God remains faithful to his promise to Israel. In fact, while they may have failed to witness to God's righteousness to the Gentiles as he originally intended, he is now using their failure in order to bring in the Gentiles. This being the case, it is hardly likely he will abandon them at the last when, albeit negatively, God has achieved his purpose through them, in accordance with his purpose in electing them in the first place.

This argument reassures believing Jews, concerned about their fellow non-believing countrymen, or unhappy about the inclusion of the Gentiles, that God will not behave unrighteously towards the nation. At the same time it demonstrates to the Gentiles their indebtedness to the Jews, reminding them that their inclusion as people of God is in a sense secondary, and that it is not so very long since they were in the same position vis-a-vis God. Therefore they ought to show respect to the Jewish non-believers.

12:1-15:13

Rom 5-8 called on believers to live out their justification in practical righteousness, in order to join in the work of eliminating death's encroachment on life, assuring them that, no matter what suffering that might lead them into, they need not fear, because death was now rendered ultimately powerless and nothing, apart from turning away from God and back to submission to sin, could cancel out their justification and promised resurrection. In Chapters 12-15 the call to live out their justification is based on the preceding conclusion that the completion of God's purpose depended on the bringing in of all the Gentiles, and then the Jews. This process could be accelerated by the witnessing of those who were already believers. By living out their justification, exercising the gift of the spirit in practical service, onlookers would be attracted to their God either through admiration or, as in the case of the Jews, jealousy. If they, in response to the example set by believers, could be induced to believe the gospel of God's righteousness, they too would be justified and equipped to participate in this work.

Although he does not spell it out in detail, Paul speaks of believers being assigned different tasks. Each has its own importance, and all concurrently mutually complement each other. This enables Paul to continue his image of a believer being in Christ, by speaking of the different believers together forming the body of Christ, individually being members thereof. This then suggests, that the task of the community of believers is to continue the work of Christ, namely, to reveal God's righteousness as promising justification of the ungodly who believe this revelation. While justification itself is by faith, and strictly

independent of past, present or future temporary lapses into sin, God's righteous requirement of man, in response to his giving his power, is that this be exercised in behaviour which demonstrates righteousness, not to him, but to unbelieving mankind. Since this is carried out through Christ, it would appear that Christ takes the place occupied by the law and circumcision in Judaism. Paul therefore spells out some aspects of such righteous behaviour, referring in particular to the need for mutual respect for fellow- members, with regard to interpersonal relationships, recognition of the value of each other's particular responsibilities, and acceptance and encouragement of those who hold to particular practices or attitudes which, while perhaps unnecessary for their being and remaining justified, may be sincerely offered to God by those who prefer to operate in this way without compromising their faith. Paul further suggests what he considers to be appropriate behaviour towards non-believers, especially persecutors or enemies, and to the civil government, again for the purpose of presenting themselves, and hence God, in the most favourable light possible so that God's righteousness might be revealed.

This shows that when Paul speaks of his call to apostleship being to bring about the obedience of faith (1:5) he could well intend the expression to have the double meaning of obedient response to the revelation of God's righteousness, namely faith, and simultaneously the obediently righteous behaviour, which those justified by faith live out, in order to witness to their justification, and so to their righteous God who justifies the ungodly.

In conclusion, it is maintained that the main body of the study, as summarised in the outline above has substantiated the claim that the theme of the revelation of the righteousness of God, and hence Paul's assertion that God is 'he who justifies the ungodly', are central to each section of the epistle, and that both within each section, and from section to section, the theological points made are logically connected. It is therefore affirmed that Käsemann is correct in his assertion that Paul's theology in Romans has an inner unity and logical coherence which can be clearly demonstrated.

3. Although a significant proportion of commentators likewise argue, to a greater or lesser extent, that the the revelation of the righteousness of God, as

righteousness by which man is justified by faith, is the theme of Romans and the centre of Paul's theology as presented therein, there has been a series of writers who have objected to this interpretation as a misrepresentation of Paul or of Judaism, or of both Paul and Judaism. The objections of two relatively recent and influential writers, Stendahl and Sanders, have been outlined.

In view of these, the conclusions reached above must be tested against the objections raised.

Stendahl objects to the prominence given to the doctrine of justification, and to Romans as a whole, in the interpretation of Pauline theology. Firstly, he argues for the particularity of the doctrine as being specifically related to the question of *the relation between Jews and Gentiles*, as opposed to the more typical position which regards the specific situation as an example of the general situation of mankind, and interprets the letter as *an answer to the general question of how one is to be saved*. At the same time, *the non-believing Jews are taken as a stereotype* of the wrong attitude to God.

These objections can certainly be directed against Käsemann. He regards the letter as a general outline of Paul's teaching to the Gentiles, taking Rom 9-11 alone to be concerned with the question of Jewish-Gentile relations. Dealing with this issue is a significant part of the exposition of the doctrine of God's righteousness as a doctrine of justification, but in no sense central to the argument as a whole. Accordingly, he does regard the letter to be a spelling out of the means of salvation, as is confirmed by his labelling 1:18-3:20, "The need for the revelation of the righteousness of God". He argues that this section spells out the human predicament, the Gentiles being the stereotype of the ungodly, the Jews the stereotype of the pious, where the pious are distinguished from the ungodly in that they seek to establish their own righteousness by works, obedience to the law being the stereotype of this supposed position. Käsemann concludes that this section shows all mankind to be in a hopeless situation. It is Käsemann's opinion that the gospel in the form Paul presents it in 1:17, in terms of the revelation of the righteousness of God as righteousness by faith, is particularly suited to Paul's task of preaching to the Gentiles.

Although Paul gives very little historical information in Romans, so that any reconstruction of his purpose in writing to the Romans, or of the historical factors which determine what he says in the epistle must be almost entirely speculative, there are features of the epistle which are not adequately accounted for in Käsemann's reconstruction. It is hard to see why Paul should feel the need to defend his work with Gentiles to a predominantly Gentile congregation, even if rumours against Paul had reached Rome, so this must be regarded as a weakness in Käsemann's assessment either of Paul's purpose, or of the composition of the Roman congregation, or both.

Nor does this view make sense of the predominantly Jewish nature of much of the epistle. The argument, and the frequent reference to scripture and tradition, would seem to be far more suited to a Jewish audience. At the same time, there are sections specifically addressed to Gentiles, and a number of references to mutual comparisons and/or judgement, implying discord of some kind in Rome, or perhaps in the church in general. Finally, the claim that justification is a theme particularly relevant to Gentiles does not make sense. Questions of righteousness and justification are specifically related to God's relationship to Israel. If Paul wanted to concentrate on Gentiles alone, one would imagine that it would have been more appropriate to re-word the gospel in terms of God's relationship to mankind as its creator. On these grounds and on grounds of the message Paul is presenting, as outlined above, it has been suggested in the study that, as Stendahl argues, the epistle is particularly concerned to address the question of the relation between Jews and Gentiles, in particular of the position of the Jews in light of the inclusion of the Gentiles as chosen people of God. Likewise, it is maintained that, as Stendahl stresses, the particularity of the argument calls into question the generalising, stereotyping interpretation which Käsemann presents.

Stendahl's particular objection to an analysis of Romans which puts justification by faith at the centre is that this is a misreading of Paul motivated by the introspective conscience of Western man who, particularly from the time of the reformation, was plagued with the need to be assured of salvation, even going so far as to present Paul as having suffered frustration and guilt at his own sinfulness prior to his encounter with Christ.

This criticism, however, is not relevant to Käsemann's interpretation. At this point Käsemann stands out against the typical Lutheran approach, despite assigning a central position to justification. The difference is that his interpretation of 1:16ff, rightly, is that man's need for salvation is revealed simultaneously with the revelation of the means of salvation. It is only by believing the gospel and so being saved that believers come to recognise the dire straits in which they *had been*. In particular, it is only through belief in the gospel that the Jews could recognise that the law and circumcision, far from guaranteeing their salvation, was actually working against them. In Käsemann's interpretation, Paul actually criticises them for their confident piety, and so their lack of recognition of their need, which should have been apparent to them through their reading of scripture. In addition, Käsemann's focus is not on the salvation of individuals for their own sake. By interpreting the gospel in terms of God's initiative to bring about his purpose for his creation, so that his action is carried out in order to enable men to take up their responsibility as creatures indebted to him for their existence, the concern for the salvation of the individual is shown to be important primarily as one more step towards God's rightful claim being acknowledged. God justifies the ungodly for his own sake, though a fundamental part of this is that his love for his creation is significant in his acting to enable men to live the abundant life he intended for them.

On grounds of this alternative interpretation, it is argued that this aspect of Stendahl's objection to the position assigned to the doctrine of justification does not stand. It is possible to regard justification by faith as central to Romans without reading in Luther's introspective desire for assurance of salvation. Coupled with this is Stendahl's objection that interpretations which place the doctrine of justification at the centre depend on a misinterpretation of the notion of righteousness. He argues that the righteousness of God was originally association with salvation, triumph, victory, the destruction of enemies. It was something to be looked forward to with joy and not fundamentally concerned with judgement which was to be feared. Against this, it is argued that Käsemann correctly surmises that the whole basis of Paul's argument against the law and Judaism is that the Jews assume this still to be so when it is manifestly *not* the case. Being righteous is of value only if it is actually the righteousness which comes from faith and not righteousness in name only. He points out that

their view of righteousness ought instead to conform to that held by those Jews of the past who know themselves to be *ungodly*, like Abraham and David, who did indeed recognise that only God could make them righteous, and that his judgement was based on faith, not action.

Similarly Paul frequently quotes from Deutero-Isaiah, which addresses the message of the righteousness of God to the nation which knew itself to be cut-off from God. In addition, Stendahl's suggestion that the doctrine of justification wrongly focusses on judgement is manifestly a misinterpretation of Paul, and is certainly not present in Käsemann's commentary. In both the Old Testament and Romans it is made clear that the justification of the ungodly is the *result* of God's vindicating righteousness *following* his judgement which is self-vindicating. Far from what Stendahl suggests, Käsemann's emphasis on the righteousness of God shows that, contrary to the Jewish judgement that they were righteous and the Gentiles ungodly, God's *judgement* is that *all* are ungodly, so this judgement is countered by the gospel announcement that God of necessity *justifies by faith*, so his righteousness *is* to be received with joy by *all believers*, Jews and Gentiles alike. Thus Stendahl's view that emphasis on justification distorts the meaning of righteousness is clearly mistaken. On the contrary, it is this doctrine which affirms *his* view of righteousness in contrast to the Jewish misinterpretation, described by Käsemann as piety which assumes justification is by works.

Stendahl argues further that justification by faith is just one of Paul's arguments concerning Jewish-Gentile relationships, so that to focus on this is to obscure both the variety of Paul's thought and the particularity of his epistle. Against this we argue that Käsemann's interpretation highlights the variety of Paul's thought. In particular, by recognising that justification is just one way of expressing God's specific action, which can equally be described as creation or resurrection, he gives breadth and depth to the doctrine of justification, showing that this expression is, as Stendahl suggests, used because it is the one which is best suited to Paul's particular concerns, but also has a range of significance that extends far beyond the immediate concern of the contrast between faith in Christ and obedience to the law. In addition, by arguing for the centrality of the justification of the ungodly, as it is filled out by its concurrency with creation out

of nothing and resurrection from the dead, Käsemann, far from obscuring the variety of Paul's thought, actually highlights it by pointing to the fact that all other ideas are implications derived from, and so implicitly contained within the central affirmation. If one focusses on the particularity of Paul's arguments, as Stendahl suggests, only those notions which relate specifically to the specific issue come to light. In this respect, then, *Käsemann's interpretation again shows that Stendahl's objection is not upheld*. More particularly, the fact that Käsemann focusses on Paul's depiction of God, rather than the particularity of the specific argument, in presenting the doctrine of justification, shows that it can have the sort of universality which Stendahl denies it. The error comes when the particular situation, which Paul responds to with an argument based on the general premise, is itself taken to be typical of humanity in general. Stendahl argues that Paul's overall framework is salvation history, but, apart from anything else, this framework must presuppose a particular view, so that this theme must be subordinate to Paul's threefold depiction of God and therefore of the chief expression of him in Romans, namely that God is he who justifies the ungodly. Thus it is claimed that Käsemann is correct in assigning centrality to justification, since this is applicable both to the question of Jewish-Gentiles relationships and salvation history, which, contrary to Stendahl's proposal, must be subordinate to this theme.

In summary, it would appear that, in arguing for the centrality in Romans of the revelation of God's righteousness as righteousness by faith, in conformity with the declaration that God is 'he who justifies the ungodly' Käsemann demonstrates that most of Stendahl's objections to the prominence given to this theme are not upheld. While other writers have used the doctrine in the way Stendahl described, the error lies in that use, rather than in the doctrine itself. Further, since the above outline of the epistle, based on the results of the investigation recorded in the main body of this work, agrees with Stendahl's view that the issue Paul is addressing is not that of how man is to be saved, but is that of the relation between Jews and Gentiles, while simulataneously affirming the centrality of the theme of righteousness by faith, it is clear that Käsemann's interpretation and application of the argument is not dependent on, or an inevitable result of, his affirmation of the centrality of the doctrine of the justification of the ungodly by faith. Therefore, the findings of the investigation of Käsemann's contribution

to the study of Romans indicate that Stendahl is mistaken in denying the centrality of the doctrine of justification simply on the grounds of its having been misapplied. At the same time, Käsemann's insight into Paul's theology is not necessarily to be rejected merely because his apprehension of the historical motivation of the epistle can be shown to be an inadequate account of the content of Romans.

Sanders' presentation of Judaism as 'covenantal nomism'⁶ involving election, law and promise, judgement and atonement is basically affirmed by the surveys of the Old Testament carried out in the present study. This conclusion that Judaism, and Paul's argument against it, are not based on a system of legalistic works-righteousness by which the Jews *sought* to attain righteousness by their own efforts, has been shown to be a valid criticism of Käsemann's interpretation of Judaism and of his generalising application of this interpretation.

Nevertheless, Sanders' interpretation of election, the means of 'getting in' and of observing the law, the means of 'staying in' must, in the light of the above study, be quite strongly criticised. This is partly due to Sanders having restricted his study to the period 200 BC to 200 AD since the views presented in this literature are the product of a nation fighting for survival against pressure to integrate, so that positions which emphasise the uniqueness and security are particularly entrenched. On the other hand, it would seem that Paul is critical of Jews who maintain an exclusivist position over against the Gentiles, and seeks in his argument in Romans to remind his readers of the original nature of Judaism, in contrast to their present perception of their nationality and religion.

Sanders' claim that in Judaism righteousness terminology is relevant only to 'staying in', and not to 'getting in' is clearly called into question by the Old Testament, especially Deutero-Isaiah, in that Israel's election is not merely a prior condition to salvation, but *is* salvation. More importantly, this election, with its accompanying promise of life, is itself regarded as justification of the ungodly, or, alternatively, resurrection of the dead or creation out of nothing. Further, acceptance of the law, signifying acceptance of the covenant, is accep-

tance of Yahweh's offer to be their God which requires that they have faith in him. Thus obedience to the law is the means of demonstrating the maintenance of the faith by which they were saved. To say that the structure of Judaism is election followed by obedience to the law *is* to say that *the Jews entered by justification by faith, and were maintained by faith*, demonstrated by their observance of the law, re-establishment in the community after lapses was also carried out by means of justification by faith. In short, it has been shown by discussions of the Old Testament, that **justification by faith**, equally expressed as being raised through faith or being re-created through faith, is **absolutely central to the whole of Israel's understanding of its religion**. In addition, Sanders' suggestion that repentance within Judaism did not involve a change in Lordship does not make sense. The Old Testament is quite clear that those who transgress are, in so doing, turning from God to serve evil, wickedness, idols or other false gods, and that repentance involves turning *from* these allegiances *back* to allegiance to Yahweh.

In light of this, Sanders' argument that Paul believed God always intended that righteousness should be attained by faith, and not by works of the law, does not mean that this should be the case only from the time of Christ. From the very inception of Judaism justification *was* by faith and not by works of the law. Thus, in criticising the Jews for their boasting (one of a number of points in Romans that Sanders conveniently ignores), Paul's point is not that since Christ came all are ungodly and so must be justified by faith, but that **the Jews**, just as much as the Gentiles, have always been ungodly and have only been reckoned righteous because of their faith, and not through any merit of their own. To boast is to behave *as if* justification *were* by works. Similarly, to use the law as an exclusivist barrier to Gentiles as often as not without even maintaining faithful obedience to it, is to behave as if one's righteous status were a right that had been earned or was deserved rather than a gift to people who, of themselves, were no less ungodly than the Gentiles.

Before giving his interpretation of Paul's theology, Sanders explains why he neglects righteousness by faith as central. He claims that this is *individualistic* whereas Paul's theology is not. In response to Käsemann's argument to the contrary, he says that since Käsemann himself acknowledges that faith is a

matter for the individual, his claim that righteousness by faith is not individualistic is invalidated. This is absurd, firstly because Käsemann emphasises that the inclusion of an individual in salvation had its value first and foremost as a part of the whole world which is gradually, person by person, being restored to its rightful role of responsible allegiance to its creator. Secondly, when Sanders speaks instead of conversion and participation in Christ, he must acknowledge that this, too, is something taken on by individuals. Any terms Sanders uses to speak of salvation must require individual response for it to be effective. More importantly, it is hard to see how Sanders can regard Paul's assertion that the gospel reveals that righteousness by faith is for *all*, Jews and Gentiles, as an individualistic statement.

Another of Sander's objections, that the theme of *righteousness by faith relates only to the law*, also seems absurd when his analysis makes it quite clear that the fundamental difference between Judaism and Paul's religion revolves around the law, participation in Christ replacing obedience to the law as the means of 'staying in' the religion. This objection, along with Sanders claim that righteousness is derived from other themes. and not vice versa, has been shown by the establishment of the equivalence and centrality of justification, resurrection and creation to be without foundation.

Sanders' main argument against the centrality of righteousness by faith is that Paul's starting point is his **conversion** and that it was only subsequently that he worked out his ideas about the plight of man. The weakness of this argument, which assumes that the theme of righteousness by faith necessarily presupposes knowledge of man's plight has been demonstrated in the above discussion of Stendahl's position. This suggestion that the notion of union with Christ came to Paul instantly, and before he worked out that the gospel was about righteousness may be historically possible but is surely logically questionable. It certainly is not the most immediate or obvious implication of Paul's acknowledgement of Christ's Lordship or of his calling to be apostle to the Gentiles.

The acknowledgement of Christ's Lordship must surely in the first instance have been an acknowledgement of his resurrection, which has been shown to be at heart a declaration about righteousness. Both the change in Lordship and the

circumstances of Jesus' death, combined with his calling, raised the question of the status of the law as a measure of righteousness as far as God's judgement was concerned, and as Käsemann points out, simultaneously demonstrated the need for salvation, though Sanders is no doubt correct that the working out of the details of man's actual plight was secondary.

Leaving aside this speculation about Paul's thought processes, about the implications of Paul's recognition of Christ as Lord, Sanders' alternative proposal itself has major weaknesses. He argues that Paul preached the Lordship of Christ, what God was doing through his crucified, dead, buried and raised son, and concludes that *Paul's preaching was for the purpose of calling individuals to faith, not that faith was the content of the preaching*. Rather, faith was the means of participating in God's saving action. What Sanders neglects to explain is how hearers were to know that it was faith that was required of them, unless that were at least part of the content of preaching. He also fails to recognise the obvious fact that the notion of Christ's Lordship itself is more frequent than that the hearers are called to put their faith in Christ. Instead, Sanders implies that Paul spoke only of the benefits of salvation without giving any indication that the very idea of Lordship was fundamentally one of faith, of how the change of Lordship constituted salvation. If, as Sanders says, Paul preached what God was doing through Christ, he must surely have spoken in terms of at least one of the ideas of justification of the ungodly, resurrection of the dead or creation out of nothing. In fact, in his second work Sanders does describe the means of entering the community of those who will be saved as justification by faith, limiting his rejection of this doctrine to the claim that it has no part in staying in the community, and arguing that it is not central by arbitrarily limiting the notion of centrality to the means of maintaining the position established by justification.

Sanders makes inadequate and often illogical claims throughout his discussion of some of the details of Paul's theology as he understand it. He argues that there are two major benefits for those who enter the community: *future expectation* of salvation, as righteousness and resurrection, *and present guarantee* through the Spirit. He simply ignores the notion of the Spirit as first fruits of salvation, that has already taken place in justification, even though he recognises election in Judaism as being salvation. In other words, he emphasises future eschatology

and ignores its present, albeit partial, realisation, belief in the existence of which Käsemann has adequately demonstrated from Paul's writing. Sanders argues that *good behaviour is required* if one is to remain in the community.

As far as Romans is concerned, Paul certainly says nothing of the kind. Good behaviour is called for as an outward demonstration of the reality of the salvation that has taken place and as service which shows that it is God's will that man should live responsibly toward him. In so far as it is a means of staying in, Paul's warning is that if one continues to sin, or to keep the precepts of the law, one is in greater danger of slipping back into obedience to these as if sin or the law were gods. This would mean that they had ceased to maintain faith in God through allegiance to his son. That is, it is the maintenance of faith, and not the behaviour itself that ensures one's continuence with the community of the saved. Further, it is in this context that Paul introduces the idea of being in the Spirit or in Christ. Thus **being-in-Christ** takes the place of being under the law in that it is by this means that a believer is protected from lapsing, and equipped for service as witness to faith and to the will of God. As such it is a gift of salvation and not a pre-condition of it. Through union with Christ one receives the power which enables the justified to be *righteous*, the dead to *live* and those who were nothing to be new beings and true *creatures*, as a foretaste of what they will be in entirety once they are removed, through death, from the temptations, challenges and limitations of earthly life. Sanders himself says that Paul's subject is soteriology, It is clear from this that being-in-Christ is secondary and subsidiary to the actual action which justifies the ungodly.

In arguing for the **centrality of participatory terminology**, Sanders says on the one hand that it is *not derived*, and on the other hand it was the presence of the Spirit that led Paul to the notions of participation in one Spirit and therefore to union in Christ. He suggests that the idea of participation is used to prove other points but does not itself require proof whereas a reading of Romans gives the impression that Paul does not use the notion as a *proof* but as the picture he devises for explaining why and how Christ's death and the gift of the Spirit enable believers to live in *this* life in accordance with God's will, in anticipation of, and in witness to, the life after death that is promised to those whom God judges to be righteous, namely those whom he has justified by faith.

Sanders also suggests the *diversity of expressions* for the notion of participation confirm its importance. Then he claims that justification and righteousness are also expressed by a variety of other terms and therefore *cannot* be central. Thus Sanders can be accused of using arguments to support the position he wishes to maintain without even using his observations consistently. Again Sanders favours the notion of change of Lordship rather than righteousness by faith because he says *Paul is not concerned with expiation* for past sins but with the guarantee of future salvation, implying that justification by faith is about expiation for past sins when the whole point of justification by faith, as is clear in the Old Testament, is that the past is simply shut out as if it never existed. Even if Sanders prefers to speak of salvation being guaranteed because believers have, with Christ, died to the power of sin, this theory, just as much as justification, requires some explanation about the significance of past sins, an explanation which speaks of Christ being the expiation for these,

Sanders further attempts to demote righteousness by faith by listing *other terms for entry into the community* of those to be saved. He refers to new creation as a term for both getting in and staying in. Since this has to be shown to be an equivalent alternative expression for the same action as that which effects justification, this point confirms that justification is relevant both to getting in and continuing in the religion. Another term is freedom. This, says Sanders, is a result of the change of Lordship. He does not acknowledge that this freedom, as Käsemann has demonstrated, comes because one knows oneself to be saved and therefore free from sin, the law, fear of judgement, and above human condemnation, suffering that would normally imply divine condemnation, and so on. Thereby Sanders makes out that this is equivalent to righteousness by faith when in reality it is a consequence of it. The same can be said of the other transfer terms he cites, since it has been demonstrated that all Paul's themes can be derived from the central affirmation that God justifies the ungodly. This is his righteousness, the behaviour appropriate to him in his relationship with man, that the gospel reveals.

A further inconsistency comes in Sanders' interpretation of *Jewish and Christian obedience*. Observance of the law, including the means of atonement for re-establishing broken relationship and involving the interplay of God's judgement

and mercy, is the means by which the Jews maintain the relationship established with God at their election. This means of remaining in the Jewish religion is, in Sanders' view, described by righteousness terminology. On the other hand, although Christians, too, are, in Sanders' opinion, required to be obedient, and likewise have the means of re-establishing broken relationship, with precisely the same interplay of God's judgement and grace, he insists that righteousness terminology is irrelevant to the question of the ongoing life of the believer who has been justified by faith. Both the weakness of this argument, and this study's demonstration of the centrality of righteousness by faith throughout the whole of Romans, enable the conclusion that justification has both initial and ongoing significance in both Judaism and Paul's religion. At the same time it should be noted that *the relation between the law and righteousness* of which Sanders speaks is different from that suggested in this thesis. It has been argued above that the call to obedience is a call to demonstrate or witness to the salvation already procured by faith. Although one's deeds will be judged, and rewarded or punished, either in the present or the future, both religions affirm that the level of one's obedience, either to the law or to Christ, neither guarantees nor jeopardises salvation so long as faith is maintained.

Sanders' key point is that Paul's acceptance of Christ's Lordship and of his calling to be apostle to the Gentiles, meant that he realized **one need not be Jewish to be righteous**. It was because of this alone that *Paul rejected election and the law and substituted justification by faith and union with Christ*. It was because the law did not allow for faith in Christ or for equality of Gentiles and Jews, and not because the law led to legalism or self-righteousness or efforts to attain one's own salvation, that Paul made the changes he did. Otherwise *the two religions are very much the same*, and not to be regarded as being mutually antithetical. In addition, *the supposed antithesis between law and faith* is not intended to be understood as a significant contrast between doing works or believing. Rather, Paul makes this point in order to argue that one does not have to be Jewish to be saved. This part of Sanders' argument is upheld by the findings of this study, and is supported as a valid criticism of Käsemann's interpretation of Romans, due in part to his opinion that Romans spells out Paul's teaching to the Gentiles in isolation, rather than being an address directed to a particular audience with specific problems, and in part to his perception of the Jewish religion, shown by

Sanders to be historically untenable.

Nevertheless Sanders' apparent assumption that a false understanding of Judaism is an automatic consequence of affirming the centrality of righteousness by faith has been shown to be invalid since the interpretation of Romans offered herein is able to affirm an acceptable picture of the Jewish attitude to the law while still affirming the centrality of the theme of righteousness by faith. In addition, the above discussion highlights the weakness or invalidity of Sanders' arguments against the centrality of this theme in the whole of Paul's theology. Therefore, it would seem that Sanders assumes that, because when the theme of justification by faith has been presented as central it has generally been accompanied by a false understanding of the Jewish religion, the theme itself is to be rejected. By so doing, it would seem that Sanders throws the baby out with the bathwater. Despite Sanders' useful contribution, it is still maintained that Käsemann is correct in asserting the centrality of righteousness by faith in Paul's argument in Romans where the righteousness of God that is revealed in the gospel is that he is the God who justifies the ungodly, gives life to the dead and brings into existence that which does not exist.

In light of the foregoing discussion of the arguments of Stendahl and Sanders, it is concluded that Käsemann's insight into Paul's theology is to be affirmed independently of his reconstruction of the historical situation he supposes Paul to be addressing. His commentary on Romans has thus been shown, in this area at least, to have made a distinctive new contribution to the understanding of Paul, despite the fact that certain aspects deserve to be seriously criticised or rejected.

Appendix A

Ehler's Contribution to the Study of Käsemann's Thought

Ehler's Thesis

A recent¹ and most welcome investigation into Käsemann's work on the New Testament is the comprehensive and sympathetic exposition by the Roman Catholic scholar, Bernard Ehler. His book, *Die Herrschaft des Gekreuzigten: Ernst Käsemanns Frage nach der Mitte der Schrift* (Berlin and New York, 1986), presents his attempt to order Käsemann's thought around the "kernel question" of the centre of scripture. By relating a wide range of Käsemann's ideas to the theme of the justification of the ungodly he clearly demonstrates how it is that Käsemann asserts that this theme is not only central to Paul's theology as a whole², but is also the centre of the New Testament and of all scripture³.

In our study we have concentrated on the question of the centre of Romans. We have demonstrated that justification of the ungodly *can* be regarded as the centre of this epistle (Chapter 3). We have further argued that, while creation *ex nihilo* and resurrection of the dead can equally be shown to be central (Chapters 2 and 4), and are equivalent expressions of the justification of the ungodly, it is justification of the ungodly which expresses the gospel revelation of the righteousness of God in the form most suitable for Paul's particular argument. Further, it is the recognition that justification therefore speaks simultaneously of creation and resurrection that gives it the breadth and depth which enables it to operate as the central theological theme of the whole of Romans. On the basis of this, it

would seem that this first step towards formulating the centre of Pauline theology and the New Testament⁴ has the potential to be developed in a way that would confirm such a role for the theme.

Finally, since we have shown that all three themes similarly occur in some form and as equivalent notions in the Old Testament, it would seem that the theme of the justification of the ungodly must at least be a valid contender for being described as the centre of scripture. Thus we affirm, on the basis of an entirely different approach, that justification by faith is the central theme of Romans, and postulate that this approach could be extended in such a way that we would agree with Ehler that Käsemann's thought demonstrates that justification of the ungodly constitutes the centre of scripture.

Letter and Spirit: The Problem of the Canon

The book is divided into three main sections. The first main section presents and discusses Käsemann's views on the problem of the canon under the thematic heading, 'Letter and Spirit'. Ehler expounds Käsemann's arguments against the idea of speaking of a closed canon. His major argument is that scripture consists of a wide variety of different theologies. The diversity of theologies means that the unity of the church cannot be based on the canon which instead gives rise to a diversity of confessions, just as it reflects diversity in the primitive church. This means that some criterion is required for distinguishing what is, or is not, right; what is, or is not, misunderstanding. In other words, the problem is to find how to discern the spirits.

Käsemann argues, according to Ehler, that the solution to the problem lies in the recognition that the 'word of God' is not identical to the canon and scripture. The purpose of scripture was, and is, to bear witness to Jesus Christ. But Jesus stands over against the church and scripture, thereby relativizing both. It is the heard word of God, which ever anew creates the faith of the church and the individual, which lies behind the unity of the church and the centre of the scripture, the canon within the canon. This is consistent with Käsemann's approach to New Testament study, namely, that radical exegesis is not just a matter of scientific

method, but involves presenting the text in terms which address present day listeners.

In his essay, "The Spirit and the Letter"⁵, Käsemann argued that Paul "for the first time in Christian history, developed an approach to a theological hermeneutic"⁶. This hermeneutic is "the Pauline antithesis of a spirit and letter"⁷ which Käsemann suggests could be applied to the Christian interpretation of both Old and New Testaments. The texts which refer to this antithesis are 2 Cor 3:6; Rom 2:27-29; Rom 7:6. Ehler draws attention to this argument of Käsemann's, then proceeds to present his own discussion of the relevant passages. In each passage, letter and spirit are shown to represent other antitheses typical of Käsemann's exposition of Paul: old and new aeon, faith and disbelief, principalities and powers, old and new covenants, spirit and law (when the law is read according to the letter), faith and superstition, God's righteousness and one's own righteousness, before and now, weak and strong. The point of separation between each of these pairs, including spirit and letter, is, according to Ehler's reading of Käsemann, the message of justification.

Since our own study has shown that the doctrine of justification is central in Romans in that it gives rise to all other ideas, it follows that each of Paul's expressions for salvation are derived from the theme of the justification of the ungodly. Thus our alternative argument affirms the same claim as Ehler's exegetical study: it can readily be demonstrated that each of the antitheses, represented by the antithesis of spirit and letter, divide under the criterion of the justification message, as Käsemann says. It is in this way that Jesus relativizes scripture. The word of God which addresses man through scripture is the word of the cross which announces the gift of new creation through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ⁸.

Again following the approach in Käsemann's essay on the subject, Ehler tests this conclusion by interpreting Rom 10:5-13. As a scriptural proof, it offers a Pauline interpretation of the Old Testament, and therefore a means of confirming, or otherwise, the conclusion drawn concerning letter and spirit as Paul's hermeneutic. The conclusion is that Paul considers it legitimate to read the Old Testament in light of the gospel. Whereas the Jews read it according to the letter and so interpreted its message as the announcement of righteousness by the law,

when it is read according to the spirit it can be seen to speak of righteousness by faith. Those who read according to the letter work out the content of scripture themselves, just as by keeping the law they seek a righteousness of their own. Justification, on the other hand, allows Paul to read the texts so that they conform to the message of the gospel. In other words, it allows him to criticize the texts so that what he hears from them is, through the spirit, the word of God spoken to him, just as his righteousness is given to him. In short, according to Ehler's presentation of Käsemann's interpretation, the most significant difference for Paul between letter and spirit is the same as the antithesis between law and gospel.

Against this particular conclusion, we argue that the law does not intrinsically stand in antithesis to the gospel. According to our understanding, the Old Testament presentation of the law *assumes* justification of the ungodly, and is not dependent on the gospel to be understood in this light. Rather, Paul's argument seems to be addressed specifically to Jewish-Christians who believe that Gentile believers need to become Jews in order to share God's promises. Paul rejects this as amounting to a position which is *not* part of Judaism, namely, justification by adherence to the law. It is our contention that the law should *not* be presented as a Jewish parallel to the gospel. Rather, law parallels those expressions which relate to *Christian obedience*; election and/or the *establishment of the covenant* being the Jewish equivalent of the revelation of God's righteousness in the gospel. Insofar as Paul attacks the law as a means of establishing one's own righteousness, the Jewish error lies in their believing that obedience to the law, as a reflection of faith, is to demonstrate one's righteousness to *God* when the real intention was that it should demonstrate righteousness as a *witness* to God amongst the *Gentiles*.

Ehler completes this section with an exposition of reformation hermeneutics and a detailed discussion of the above conclusions concerning the relation of spirit and letter as they apply to the canon.

The Theological Relevance of History

The second major section presents Käsemann's thoughts on the theological relevance of history, and the place of the historical Jesus in the question of the canon. Clearly this is almost entirely beyond the scope of our study. Nevertheless, we can affirm from our discussion of Käsemann's Romans that christology plays a fundamental role in his interpretation of Paul's theology. In particular, in paralleling the gospel of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus (1:1ff) with the gospel revelation of the righteousness of God as justification of the ungodly by faith, he asserts that Jesus' sonship is the christological basis of righteousness as gift and power, where the power is exercised as Christ's lordship over the justified. Ehler points out that who Jesus is, and so christology, must be related to the historical Jesus⁹.

Justification of the Ungodly as the Centre of Scripture

The final section concerns itself with Käsemann's arguments relating to the proposal that justification of the ungodly is the centre of scripture. Consistent with the preceding section, Ehler begins the presentation by outlining the key points Käsemann is making when he asserts the priority of christology in Pauline theology, in particular in his doctrine of justification. Ehler then presents important and accurate summaries of the most significant aspects of Käsemann's interpretation of Paul's christology: the emphasis it puts on divine lordship, exercised through Christ, as the Creator's claim, which is met in the everyday obedience of believers; the interpretation of the death and resurrection of Jesus as inaugurating the new age which shows that apocalyptic is the mother of Christian theology; the importance of recognizing that the risen Lord is the crucified one, which affirms that justification is of the ungodly, sets the pattern of Christian lifestyle, destroys illusion and challenges any theology which is not 'theologia crucis'.

Ehler draws his study to a conclusion by presenting a full discussion of Käsemann's understanding of the justification of the ungodly, highlighting the relation of this theme to christology, the Lordship of God over his creation, the historical Jesus,

and obedience. This, too, is a thorough and accurate account consistent with the understanding presented herein. In this discussion Ehler presents Käsemann's insight into the inter-relation of *creatio ex nihilo*, resurrection of the dead and justification of the unjust which we have presented as Käsemann's distinctive contribution to the study of Romans, the foundation of the claim that justification of the ungodly is Paul's development of the primitive gospel and, as such, the central theme of the epistle. Ehler, of course, goes much further in that his aim is to support the claim that justification of the ungodly is the centre of scripture. Nevertheless, it is clear that the two different approaches have led to much the same conclusions.

Consequently, Ehler sees the need to defend Käsemann against charges that his postulation of the centrality of justification is no more than orthodox Lutheranism, as did we. Ehler, however, concentrates on the criticisms of fellow Romans Catholic scholars, rather than other Protestant interpretations. Against the objection that Käsemann absolutizes a small part of the whole scripture, Ehler points out the richness of the content of justification¹⁰. He then rejects alternative contenders for the centre of scripture by arguing that they lack the sharpness necessary for them to act as criteria for the interpretation or right hearing of scripture. On the other hand, in Käsemann's analysis of Early Catholicism, the doctrine of justification was able to throw into relief the theological changes that had taken place, the false theologies that had been exchanged for those consistent with a 'theologia crucis'. This analysis highlights the too little recognized fact that Käsemann's view that justification is the centre of scripture is not the *result* of his research, but its *presupposition*. In this respect Käsemann affirms his standing as a protestant and a Lutheran.

This is not to say, however, that Käsemann makes the same mistakes as Luther appears to have, or as current reading interprets him to have made. Before one refutes his arguments, says Ehler, one must take account of, and argue against, *his* understanding of justification. If we understand him correctly, Ehler here is very much in harmony with our defence of Käsemann which claims that the recognition of the coinherence of creation and resurrection with justification raises Käsemann's presentation of justification as central above the criticisms normally directed against it.

Ehler completes his study with further illustrations of the way justification of the ungodly, as hermeneutic, shows up false theologies of all kinds. Thus he demonstrates the polemical nature of the theme to be valid in general, and not, as Stendahl and others have argued, only of secondary importance because of the particularity of its use in Romans. This aspect of the theme did not come to light in our study, but is clearly supportive of our assessment that the wide acclaim which greeted his commentary was entirely deserved.

Conclusion

Ehler has done a great service in bringing together various aspects of Käsemann's thought from a considerable diversity of sources. He has presented a well-balanced, perceptive and sympathetic treatment of Käsemann's thought, highlighting by his careful and logical arrangement of the material, the remarkable unity of a highly complex pattern of inter-related theological concepts. In thereby making Käsemann's theology more readily accessible, and providing a framework for easier assimilation of his diverse ideas, Ehler himself has made a significant contribution to the study of the New Testament.

Footnotes

Preamble

1. J. Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (2nd ed.; London, 1696), pp.305f.
2. C.S. Rodd, "Talking Points from Books," *The Expository Times*, 91(2,80), p.34.
3. D.J. Harrington, Review of E. Käsemann, *An die Römer*, *Biblica*, 55(4,74), pp.583f.
4. H. Hübner, "Existentielle Interpretation der Paulinischen 'Gerechtigkeit Gottes'," *New Testament Studies*, 21(4,75), p.488: ". . . ein Werk, das sicherlich zu den bedeutendsten neutestamentlichen Kommentaren dieses Jahrhunderts zu rechnen ist"
5. W.G. Kümmel, "Die Botschaft des Römerbriefs," *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 99(7,74), p.487: "dieser Kommentar das Verständnis des Römerbriefs entscheidend gefördert hat und zu sorgfältigem Studium wärmstens empfohlen werden kann."
6. J.A. Fitzmeyer, Review of E. Käsemann, *An die Römer*, *Theological Studies*, 35(4,74), p.747.
7. Rodd, *op. cit.*.
8. E.F. Osborn, "Käsemann on Romans," *Australian Biblical Review*, 23(1975), pp.30f.
9. Rodd, *ibid.*, says, "It is a commentary that will be on the shelves of all scholars, but I hope it will also be on the shelves (and the desks) of many ministers."
10. Many such are limited in their study of Romans to two or three major English commentaries, such as Barrett, Cranfield or Dodd, and may not even have a working knowledge of Greek. While this situation might be regarded as being quite unsatisfactory, it is nevertheless the case, and ought

not to be ignored. In fact this situation makes it all the more urgent that Käsemann's commentary, being highly commended as it is, be made as accessible as possible to them.

11. This need for constant re-reading, whilst being a serious problem, and hence deterrent, in the initial stages, does, in the long-term, become an attraction. As E.F. Osborn, in "20th Century Teachers. Käsemann: In controversy often," *Church & Nation*, March 12, 1980, p.2, rightly points out, "The reader will discover more everytime he returns to an essay or a book." Osborn further defends the complexity of Käsemann's work, as he explains in "Käsemann and Ebeling," *Colloquium* 3(2,69) p.119, "One of the features of theology today is the complexity which is present in all who are making a worth-while contribution. Because the problems facing theology are related to a complex world, no treatment which is accurate can achieve the simplicity which most of us now look for." Further, in his article, "Historical Critical Exegesis - Käsemann's Contribution," *Australian Biblical Review*, 19(1971), p.20, Osborn says "Precision of exegesis does not invite lazy readers who want to know what to expect . . . much of Käsemann's work is so compressed that it has to be read many times . . . Now there is value in this austere compression. The critical study of the New Testament requires the perception of the close and unexpected integration of certain ideas. We might see the points separately more easily in an extended, well-padded, comfortable treatment. We could never grasp concrete complexity as illuminating simplicity except through a concise treatment; and the study of the New Testament depends largely on our ability to do this."
12. C.F.D. Moule, Review of E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 32(2,81), pp.501f, notes that the translation is "sometimes plain wrong", and is critical also of the proof-reading, especially of the Greek and Latin in the text.
13. Moule, *ibid.*, p.498, says, "The commentary is a massive protest against myopic exposition, and abounds in epigrammatic sallies against misinterpreters."
14. Our view that the real value of Käsemann's commentary lies elsewhere than in the extensive detail, is supported by Osborn's prediction, "Käsemann on Romans," *op. cit.*, p.29, "it is not for its massive scope, but rather for its penetrating insight that the work will be recognised."
15. J. Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thesalonians*, trans. by R. McKenzie (Edinburgh, 1961), p.3.
16. S. Milligan, *Silly Verse for Kids* (Harmondsworth, 1968), p.11.
17. Käsemann, pp.Vf; ET, pp.viif.

18. Moule, *op. cit.*, p.499.
19. While at first sight it may appear that, in so doing, we run into the trap of seeking simplicity where none is to be found (cf., note 11 above), thereby condoning "The perennial laziness (*pigritia perennis*) of the Christian man" (Osborn, "Historical Critical Exegesis - Käsemann's Contribution, *op. cit.*, p.21), we quote in our defence the advice Osborn gives in "20th Century Christian Teachers. Ernst Käsemann: In controversy often," *op. cit.*, "It is best to read a chapter quickly and then to go back to the key passages again and again. By this method, an acquaintance with the main lines of thought can be reached and gradually the brevity and condensed style is overcome." We contend that some prior knowledge of these main lines of thought will both help the reader to identify which *are* the key passages, and also significantly speed the process of gradually overcoming the difficulties presented by Käsemann's condensed style. This should then encourage the deeper delving that the work invites, by counteracting the immediate impression that it is too difficult to warrant the effort required to understand enough to be able to begin grappling with it.
20. Käsemann, p.IV; ET, p.viii.

Introduction

1. *PP*, pp.184f; ET, p.106.
2. *Ibid.*, p.184; ET, pp.105f.
3. *Käsemann*, p.III; ET, p.vii.
4. *PP*, pp.237f; ET, p.138.
5. Käsemann, "Justice for the Unjust," *Colloquium* 11(1978), p.10.
6. A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. by W. Montgomery (London, 1931), p.225.
7. K. Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (London, 1977).
8. E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London, 1977).
9. *Käsemann*, p.117; ET, p.123.
10. *Ibid.*, p.21; ET, p.24.

Chapter 1

1. According to J. Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought* (London, 1963), p.320, "The term 'dialectical theology' points to the belief that one cannot characterize God in some simple formula, but may have to speak of him paradoxically, balancing each affirmation with a corresponding negation in order to do justice to a God who so infinitely transcends our finite creaturely being."
2. *KK*, p.237.
3. *Käsemann*, p.III; ET, p.vii; *KK*, p.8.
4. Speaking of the lectures by Peterson, Käsemann says, "Auch das Thema meiner Dissertation über die Kirche als Christusleib wurde unter diesem Einfluss konzipiert." *KK*, p.8. The dissertation was published under the title *Leib und Leib Christi. Eine Untersuchung zur paulinischen Begrifflichkeit*, (Tübingen, 1933).
5. *Käsemann*, p.III; ET, p.vii.
6. *Ibid.*, p.III; ET, p.vii; *KK*, p.237.
7. *KK*, p.234: "Die dialektische Theologie ermöglichte eine schroffe Antithese des evangelischen Glaubens gegenüber der faschistischen Ideologie."
8. E.F. Osborn, "20th Century Christian Teachers. Ernst Käsemann: Questions from the parish", *Church & Nation*, Feb. 27, 1980, p.2.
9. *ENTT*, p.8.
10. E.F. Osborn, "Historical Critical Exegesis - Käsemann's Contribution", *Australian Biblical Review*, 19 (1971), p.18.
11. *KK*, pp.237, 244; J. Friedrich et al, "Vorwort", *Rechtfertigung: Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann*, ed. by J. Friedrich et al (Tübingen & Göttingen, 1976), p.V.
12. *KK*, p.234
13. F. Kerr, "The Theology of Ernst Käsemann - I", *New Blackfriars* 62 (729,81), p.100.
14. E. Käsemann, *Das wandernde Gottesvolk. Eine Untersuchung zum Hebräerbrieff* (Göttingen, 1939).
15. *KK*, p.236: "die fortan gültige Definition der Christenheit".
16. For a fuller discussion, see *KK*, pp.233-237.

17. *KK*, p.237.
18. *Ibid.*: "Hätten wir uns radikal von den Anschauungen und Gewohnheiten Ägyptens befreit, würden wir gegenwärtig nicht in den wahrhaft atheistischen Tanz um das goldene Kalb hineingezogen, in die Ideologie der Marktwirtschaft".
19. Osborn, "20th Century Christian Teachers. Ernst Käsemann: Questions from the parish", *op. cit.*.
20. F. Kerr, "The Theology of Ernst Käsemann - II," *New Blackfriars* 62 (730,81), p.155.
21. S. Milligan, "Said the General of the Army", *Silly Verse for Kids* (Harmondsworth, 1968), p.21.
22. Osborn, "Historical Critical Exegesis - Käsemann's Contribution", *op. cit.*, p.18f.
23. *Ibid.*, p.25.
24. Käsemann, "Was ich als deutscher Theologe in fünfzig Jahren verlernte", *KK*, pp.231-244.
25. *Ibid.*, p.244: "Immerhin habe ich mich darin geübt, die Fronten je nach meinem Verständnis von Schrift und Situation zu wechseln, meine Saat nicht zu lagern, sondern in den Wind zu werfen und zu verlernen, was andere mir beigebracht hatten. So wird man einsam, allmählich wohl auch einfältig. Doch fordert evangelische Freiheit ihren Preis, zuletzt sogar das Leben. Evangelische Freiheit ist aber das Eine, das allem Lernen und Verlernen Sinn gibt."
26. M. Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol.25, ed. by H.C. Oswald (Saint Louis, 1972), p.237; J. Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, trans. by R. MacKenzie (Edinburgh, 1961), pp.2,4.
27. *PP*, p.108; *ET*, p.60.
28. *KK*, p.7: "Echte und tiefe menschliche Bindungen führen stets in Konflikte, müssen sich gerade in ihnen bewähren. Auf meinem Weg haben sie sich gehäuft."
29. A.A. Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh* (66th reprint; London, 1977), p.4.
30. *KK*, p.7: "In kirchlicher Gemeinschaft zu leben, blieb mir ein Abenteuer."
31. *KK*, p.8: "Der Glaube kann auf das Denken nicht verzichten. Sonst wird er steril".
32. *KK*, p.8.

33. *ENTT*, p.8.
34. Osborn, "Historical Critical Exegesis - Käsemann's Contribution", *op. cit.*, p.26.
35. *ENTT*, p.7.
36. E. Käsemann, *Der Ruf der Freiheit* (Tübingen, 1968).
37. *KK*, pp.241f: "Reine Lehre' konkretisiert sich zwar in jeder Predigt, welche Christus als unsern Herrn erkennen lässt. Schon historische Fakten sprechen aber dagegen, sie als dogmatisches System zu verstehen. Sie ist lebendig immer nur vorhanden, wenn sie neu entdeckt und verkündet wird. Konfession und theologische Schule dürfen also die Christenheit nicht in ein religiöses Ghetto sperren. Das wandernde Gottesvolk durchbricht alle Schranken, und es lebt nicht aus mitgeführten Konserven."
38. Friedrich et al, *op. cit.*: "Rechtfertigung und Freiheit, Glaube und das Wagnis freier Nachfolge im (politischen) Alltag der Welt, sind Ernst Käsemanns Stichworte bis zur Stunde geblieben".
39. *ENTT*, p.8.
40. *KK*, p.8. "Vielleicht nützt es den Jüngern mehr, wenn ein alter Mann sein Leben in und mit der Kirche als eine Geschichte von Konflikten erzählt, als wenn er harmonisiert, was irdisch nie harmonisch ist."
41. *Ibid.*: "Es ist nicht einmal ausgemacht, dass man den Himmel vorwiegend als Sphäre der Harmonie betrachten darf."
42. Käsemann, p.III; ET, p.vii.
43. C.F.D. Moule, Review of E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 32 (2,81), pp.498f.
44. J.A. Fitzmyer, Review of E. Käsemann, *An die Römer*, *Theological Studies*, 35 (4,74), p.747.
45. G. Sauter, "Systematische Gesichtspunkte in Ernst Käsemanns Römerbrief-Kommentar", *Verkündigung und Forschung*, 21 (2,76), pp.80f.
46. D.J. Harrington, Review of E. Käsemann, *An die Römer*, *Biblica*, 55 (4,74), p.587.
47. P. Gisel, "L'Épître aux Romains Relue par E. Käsemann", *Revue de Theologie et de Philosophie*, 3rd series, 25 (1,75), p.48.
48. Käsemann, p.III; ET, p.vii.
49. *Ibid.*.

50. *Ibid.*, p.IV; ET, p.viii. Cf. the approach of F.C. Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ, His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine*, trans. and revised by A. Menzies from 2nd German ed. edited by E. Zeller, 2 vols. (2nd ed.; London & Edinburgh, 1876), vol. 1, p.vii, "There is no limit to controversy on points of detail. The abstract possibility of this and that detail can never be disproved: but this is not the way to dispose of a comprehensive historical theory. Such a theory appeals to its broad general truth, to which details are subordinate, and on which they depend: to the logical coherence of the whole, the preponderating inner probability and necessity of the case, as it impresses itself quietly upon the thoughtful mind; and against this the party interests of the day will sooner or later cease to assert themselves. In this conviction I leave this work to make its own way."
51. Gisel, *op. cit.*: "On se gardera néanmoins de la ranger trop vite parmi les commentaires des Réformateurs ou de K. Barth. Le travail de Käsemann est de part en part historico-critique, et il faut au moins rendre cette justice à l'auteur qu'il a quasiment lu toute la littérature allemande, anglo-saxonne et francophone consacré ces dernières décennies à l'épître aux Romains. Si le commentaire est délibérément théologique, ce n'est pas dans l'ignorance des recherches historiques. C'est au contraire au gré d'un corps à corps avec elles, sachant que la théologie ignore tout statut d'innocence extrahistorique et refusant en même temps de se contenter de la positivité des faits d'histoire ou de sombrer sous leur multiplicité."
52. Osborn, "20th Century Christian Teachers. Ernst Käsemann: Questions from the parish", *op. cit.*. See also Baur, note 50 above.
53. Käsemann, pp.IIIff; ET, p.viii.
54. In fact, although Baur's exegetical method is still used, his view of history is now generally rejected, as H. Liebing, "Historisch-kritische Theologie," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 57 (3, 60), p.317, points out: "Was wir bei einem neuen Studium Baur's zu lernen haben, ist mehr als Methode. Er hat ja—wenn es nur darum ginge—die Rezeption der historisch-kritischen Methode durch die Theologie im Grunde *erschwert*. Hätte die Theologie früher und besser auf ihn gehört, dann wäre es ihr nicht so leicht gefallen, die historische Kritik zu einer formalen Technik zu domestizieren. Es ist wohl zu verstehen, dass ihr der Schrecken des Hegelianismus in den Gliedern steckte; aber Harmlosigkeit ist keine Alternative dazu. Ehrlicher wäre ein entschlossener Antimodernismus. Wir kommen nicht an der Frage vorbei, die Baur der Theologie seiner Zeit eingeschärft hat, indem er sie die Geschichte als ihre eigene tiefste Problematik verstehen lehrte. Sofern es der Theologie darum zu tun ist, in aller Öffentlichkeit und Freiheit von einem Geschehen der Vergangenheit zu reden, das der Gegenwart mächtig ist, kann und darf sie sich nicht der Anfechtung entziehen, dass sie auf ihre eigene Endlichkeit, ihre Überholbarkeit und geschichtliche Relativität

angesprochen wird. Die Frage nach dem Sinn von Geschichte, nach der Gegenwart von Vergangenem ist die kritische Frage an sie, an die Theologie selbst. Eine jede Theologie, die diese Frage aufnimmt, und sie radikal als theologische Frage versteht, ist damit schon historisch- kritische Theologie."

55. See p.9 above.
56. Osborn, "Historical Critical Exegesis - Käsemann's Contribution", *op. cit.*, p.22.
57. *KK*, p.238: "Ohne das Selbstverständnis der ersten Christen zu bedenken, würde der Ausleger der Schrift wohl mythisch- spekulativen Geschichtsdeutung verfallen. Umgekehrt geht es zweifellos dem Alten Testament um die weltweite Geltung des ersten Gebotes, und das wird im Neuen Testament durch das Zeugnis von der Herrschaft des gekreuzigten Christus in und über der ganzen Erde konkretisiert. Das Selbstverständnis des Jüngers Jesu ergibt sich aus der Nachfolge, nicht aus einer Idee."
58. Gisel, *op. cit.*, p.50: "La croix marque l'échec des soi-distant évidences ou certitudes, tout dans l'ordre religieux que partout ailleurs. Elle ouvre ainsi sur la question - théologique - de l'identité: *qui* est l'homme? *qu'est-ce* que le monde? *qui* est Dieu? Comme tell, elle indique une limite, un jugement porte sur l'histoire des hommes. Mais la limite n'est pas negative seulement. Elle assure une specificité. Elle circonscrit une espace. Elle l'institue. Le non est solidaire d'un oui. Refuser, c'est déjà poser une identité." For an extended analysis of Käsemann's view of history, see P. Gisel, *Verité et Histoire. La Théologie dans la Modernité: Ernst Käsemann* (Paris & Geneva, 1977).
59. In *KK*, p.241, Käsemann says, "Unvergessen ist mir Bultmanns Diktum in einer Semirardebatte über den neutestamentlichen Begriff 'Kosmos': Menschheit gibt es nicht. Das ist ein Abstraktum! Ich hatte zu lernen, dass das total falsch war und viel eher das Wort 'Individuum' ein Abstraktum bezeichnet."
60. *NTQT*, p.273; *EVB 2*, p.279.
61. *NTQT*, p.273; *EVB 2*, p.278.
62. Osborn, "Historical Critical Exegesis - Käsemann's Contribution", *op. cit.*, pp.21f.
63. Osborn, "Historical Critical Exegesis - Käsemann's Contribution", *op. cit.*, p.24.
64. *Käsemann*, p.31; *ET*, p.34.
65. *Ibid.*, p.6; *ET*, p.8.

66. *Ibid.*, p.32; ET, p.36.
67. *Ibid.*, p.1; ET, p.3: "Although the theological presentation has an explicitness and emphasis which mark it off from Paul's other epistles, the letter is by no means to be regarded as a theological tractate. That may be true of the content, but the epistolary form is preserved in the introduction and conclusion . . . and the apostle's impulsive temperament constantly leaps over both conventions and strict logic. This makes it difficult to find a neat formula for his literary legacy".
68. *Käsemann*, p.1; ET, p.4.
69. With the exception of 14:1-15:13, though even here Käsemann does not specify whether this is because of misunderstanding in Rome or simply based on his experience of other congregations, *ibid.*, p.311, ET, p.323. Either way, its intention is taken to be to mollify the Jewish Christians p.391, ET, p.405.
70. *Ibid.*, p.16; ET, p.19. Käsemann assumes this since he maintains "suspicions regarding [Paul's] apostolate and teaching . . . were widespread in the Diaspora." p.390; ET, p.405.
71. *Ibid.*, p.17; ET, p.20.
72. *Ibid.*, p.30; ET, p.33.
73. *Ibid.*, p.31; ET, p.34.
74. *Ibid.*, p.383; ET, p.397.
75. *Ibid.*, p.389; ET, p.404.
76. *Ibid.*, pp.1,15; ET, pp.3,17.
77. This is not to deny Paul's genuine intention to make Rome the starting point of a mission to Spain. *Käsemann*, p.383; ET, p.397, asserts "he states that Spain is the true goal of his journey, and there is not the slightest reason . . . to call the Spanish mission a fiction." To deny his genuine intention to go to Spain is to miss "the apostle's apocalyptic self-understanding" (p.390; ET, p.404).
78. *Ibid.*, p.390; ET, p.405: "The expulsion under Claudius at least decimated the large Jewish community, which was grouped around numerous synagogues and did not have united leadership as in Alexandria. It did the same to the Jewish-Christian congregation which had grown out of that community. When the edict was softened, and especially when it was repealed, Jewish Christians returned or made their way to Rome, but they now found a Gentile-Christian majority. Even as a minority they played no very big part of Judaism in Rome took on new life. Paul could count on

the fact that this group at least would be instructed about his work, and that it could give the Gentile-Christians a more or less adequate picture of both."

79. *Ibid.*, pp.390f; ET, pp.405f.

80. Käsemann, pp.387ff; ET, pp.402f.

81. See note 69 above.

82. Käsemann, p.18; ET, p.20.

83. *Ibid.*, p.19; ET, p.22.

84. *Ibid.*.

85. *Ibid.*.

86. *Ibid.*.

87. The eschatological emphasis is a major feature of the epistle. As C.S. Rodd, "Talking Points from Books", *The Expository Times*, 92 (2,80), p.33, observes, "two inter-related themes control the entire exposition: Justification by faith and an apocalyptic eschatology." In fact it is Rodd's view, p.34, that, "Käsemann's emphasis upon justification springs from the centrality of eschatology in his understanding of Paul's thought." C.F.D. Moule, Review of E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 32 (2,81), p.501, expresses reservations about Käsemann's use of terminology on the subject, suggesting that "Misleading . . . at least for English readers, is the use of 'eschatological' and even 'apocalyptic' in such wide senses as to threaten to debase linguistic currency. 'Eschatological' seems to denote almost anything that is of God, as opposed to evolutionary, rational, or humanly self-assured." Sauter, *op. cit.*, pp.82ff, is rather more severe in his criticism of Käsemann at this point. He argues that Käsemann's view of apocalyptic is not related to any example from the history of religions, but is a complex convergence of a wide range of ideas which Käsemann shapes together in accordance with exegetical, systematic and hermeneutical principles rather than historically. Thus he argues, p.86, "Käsemanns Charakterisierung der Apokalyptik ist dagegen mE das Beispiel einer interpretatio christiana, ohne sich also solche zu erkennen zu geben." In Käsemann's defence, and against this last statement, Käsemann does declare, p.31; ET, p.34, in arguing for the all-embracing importance of eschatology, that "The theme, argument, and outcome of the whole letter point . . . to the sphere of a *uniquely modified Jewish-Christian apocalyptic*" (our emphasis). Both here and throughout his commentary Käsemann elaborates his particular interpretation, making it clear that he believes Paul's view to be different from any other known from history of religions research.

88. Rom 13:11; 5:9. Also 1 Cor 3:15; 5:5; Phil 1:19.
89. *Käsemann*, p.20; ET, p.22 "Universalism and the most radical individuation are here two sides of the same coin." This stance was taken by Käsemann in opposition to Bultmann's individualistic approach. Thus, on the one hand Käsemann can assert, *PP*, p.117; ET, p.65, that "it is both historically and factually quite wrong to make the individual the starting point of Pauline theology", and, on the other hand, *Käsemann*, p.103; ET, p.109, that "We must insist strongly that faith in Paul . . . is the act and decision of the individual person . . . and is thus an anthropological and not primarily on ecclesiological concept".
90. *Ibid.*.
91. *Ibid.*, pp.20f; ET, p.23.
92. *Ibid.*, p.22; ET, p.24.
93. *Ibid.*, pp.9f.
94. *Ibid.*, p.21; ET, p.23.
95. *Ibid.*, p.11; ET, p.13. Cf. p.8; ET, p.10: "The title 'Son of God' . . . indicates the true content of the gospel".
96. *Ibid.*, p.10; ET, p.12.
97. *Ibid.*, p.11; ET, p.13.
98. *Ibid.*, p.11; ET, p.14.
99. *Ibid.*, p.21; ET, p.24. This statement reflects another point of contention between Käsemann and Bultmann. Bultmann argued that christology was subordinate to justification by faith, whereas Käsemann is insistent that, "The Pauline doctrine of justification is entirely and solely christology", *PP*, p.130; ET, p.73. In this respect Käsemann is more in harmony with Barth.
100. *Käsemann*, p.22; ET, p.24.
101. *Ibid.*, p.24; ET, p.26.
102. *Ibid.*, p.25; ET, p.28. See also, *EVB* 2, pp.185f; *NTQT*, p.173.
103. *Ibid.*, pp.25f; ET, p.28. See also, *EVB* 2, p.187; *NTQT*, pp.173f.
104. Käsemann's insight that the way to understand Paul is to affirm tensions rather than to try to eliminate them contrasts, according to his perception at least, with usual practice. In his view, *PP*, p.117; ET, pp.65f, "It has always been a characteristic of Pauline interpretation in Germany

to fall from one extreme into another and offer enough to postulate alternatives which destroy the apostle's dialectical treatment of the facts. It is no comfort that in the English-speaking countries, for example, something similar came about under different omens." In describing this aspect of Käsemann's commentary, Gisél, *L'épître aux Romains revue par E. Käsemann*, *op. cit.*, p.46, lists a large number of antithetical pairs, of which he says, "Les questions se présentent chaque fois sous forme d'alternative. On y aura d'ailleurs reconnu, souvent, les marques d'un conflit confessionnel. En fait, Käsemann est d'avis que nous avons là une tension constitutive de toute la théologie de Paul. Et loin de vouloir choisir chaque fois l'un des termes au détriment de l'autre, l'exégète entend au contraire rendre compte de la tension elle-même, globalement, structuralement pour ainsi dire."

105. Käsemann, p.26; ET, pp.28f. The considerable importance Käsemann attaches to his interpretation of the righteousness of God as both gift and power is indicated by his assertion, *EVB* 2, p.187; *NTQT*, p.174, "We take the decisive step along the road to proper understanding of Paul when, and only when, we grasp the indissoluble connection of power and gift within the conception of the divine righteousness; having done so, we wonder why this finding has not long ago come to be taken for granted." In connection with this he says, *EVB* 2, p.187; *NTQT*, p.175, "The key to this whole Pauline viewpoint is that power is always seeking to realize itself in action and must indeed be so. It does this with the greatest effect when it no longer remains external to us but enters into us and, as the apostle says, makes us its members."
106. Käsemann, p.88; ET, p.94, *et passim*.
107. Käsemann, p.8; ET, p.10.
108. Käsemann, p.26; ET, p.29.
109. *Ibid.*, p.27; ET, p.30.
110. *Ibid.*, p.28; ET, p.31.
111. *Ibid.*, p.26; ET, p.29.
112. *Ibid.*.
113. *Ibid.*, p.30; ET, p.33.
114. *Ibid.*, p.48; ET, p.52.
115. *Ibid.*, p.80; ET, p.85.
116. *Ibid.*, p.83; ET, p.88.

117. In defence of the assumption that Paul's argument can be thus generalized and directly applied in the present, Käsemann, *PP*, pp.125ff; ET, pp.70ff, questions the assumption that because justification in Paul is a "fighting doctrine" specifically against Judaism, that it is now obsolete. Rather, he argues that the sharpness of the polemic must be retained against a tendency to blunten polemic and soften the scandal of the gospel. "If we want to understand the polemics of the Pauline doctrine of justification, we must remember this development. The doctrine undoubtedly grew up in the course of the anti-Jewish struggle and stands or falls with this antithesis. But the exegete must not make things easy for himself by simply, as historian, noting this incontrovertible fact. If he does, he could equally well call Jesus a pious Jew who had a memorable fate and left behind him a series of impressive sayings. Our task is to ask: what does the Jewish nomism against which Paul fought really represent? And our answer must be: it represents the community of 'good' people which turns God's promises into their own privileges and God's commandments into the instruments of self-sanctification. (pp.127f; ET, pp.71f).
118. Käsemann, p.32; ET, p.35.
119. These contributions are discussed in E.E. Ellis, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids, 1961), pp.24-34; A. Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History*, trans. by W. Montgomery (London, 1912), pp.10f, 19, 28ff, 58ff.
120. F.C. Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ. His Life and Work, His Epistles and Doctrine*, 2 vols., trans. and revised by A. Menzies from 2nd German ed. edited by E. Zeller, (2nd ed., London & Edinburgh, 1876).
121. B. Jowett, *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, and Romans*, 2 vols., edited and condensed by L. Campbell (3rd ed., London, 1894).
122. W. Wrede, *Paul*, trans. by E. Lummis (London, 1907).
123. A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. by W. Montgomery (London, 1931).
124. A. Deissmann, *Paul*, trans. by L.R.M Strachan (London, 1912).
125. J.S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ* (London, 1935).
126. P. Althaus, *Paulus und Luther über den Menschen* (1951).
127. J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, trans. by F. Clarke (London, 1959).
128. O. Cullmann, *Salvation in History*.

129. K. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (London, 1977).
130. W.D. Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel", *New Testament Studies*, 24 (1,77), pp.4-39.
131. E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London, 1977).
132. K. Stendahl, *op. cit.*, p.2.
133. *Ibid.*, p.1.
134. *Ibid.*, p.5.
135. *Ibid.*, pp.85f.
136. *Ibid.*, p.7.
137. *Ibid.*, p.4.
138. *Ibid.*, p.25.
139. *Ibid.*, p.33.
140. *Ibid.*, p.5.
141. *Ibid.*, p.5.
142. *Ibid.*, p.95.
143. E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London, 1977), p.17.
144. *Ibid.*, p.12.
145. *Ibid.*, p.xii.
146. *Ibid.*, p.33.
147. *Ibid.*, pp.2ff.
148. *Ibid.*, p.xii.
149. *Ibid.*, p.422.
150. *Ibid.*.
151. *Ibid.*, p.431. Sanders lists Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philip-
pians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon, though he finds Philemon to have
nothing to contribute to the discussion.
152. *Ibid.*, pp.434ff.
153. *Ibid.*, p.441.

154. *Ibid.*, p.434.
155. *Ibid.*, pp.441f.
156. *Ibid.*, p.446.
157. *Ibid.*, p.448.
158. *Ibid.*, p.452.
159. *Ibid.*, p.456.
160. *Ibid.*, p.466.
161. *Ibid.*, p.475.
162. *Ibid.*, p.482.
163. *Ibid.*, p.497.
164. *Ibid.*, p.499.
165. E.P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (London, 1983).
166. *Ibid.*, p.4.
167. *Ibid.*, p.5.
168. *Ibid.*, p.45.
169. *Ibid.*, p.46.
170. *Ibid.*.
171. *Ibid.*, pp.83ff.
172. *Ibid.*, pp.65ff.
173. *Ibid.*, pp.68ff.
174. *Ibid.*, pp.93ff.
175. *Ibid.*, pp.106ff.
176. Pp.4f above.
177. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol.1, trans. from 2nd German ed. by J. Bowden (London, 1974), p.104, argues that, "On the whole, it emerges that Hellenism also gained ground as an intellectual power in Jewish Palestine early and tenaciously. From this perspective the usual distinction between Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism needs to be corrected . . .

From about the middle of the third century B.C. *all Judaism* must really be designated '*Hellenistic Judaism*' in the strict sense, and a better differentiation could be made between the Greek-speaking Judaism of the Western Diaspora and the Aramaic/Hebrew-speaking Judaism of Palestine and Babylonia. But even this distinction is one-sided. From the time of the Ptolemies, Jerusalem was a city in which Greek was spoken to an increasing degree." Although he does not date the wide usage of Greek by Jews in Palestine as early as Hengel does, J.N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek?* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum, 19; Leiden, 1968), p.188, similarly argues for a much less sharply drawn distinction between Palestinian and Diaspora Jews. W.C. van Unnik, *Tarsus or Jerusalem: The City of Paul's Youth*, trans. by G. Ogg (London, 1962) argues for a stronger Palestinian background, and less Hellenistic influence in Paul's thought than is generally assumed.

178. H. Hammond, *A Paraphrase and Annotations Upon all the Books of the New Testament, Briefly explaining all the difficult places thereof* (6th ed. corrected; London, 1689), "A necessary Advertisement to the Reader", 1st page.
179. Hammond, *ibid.*, 2nd page, gives further irrefutable reason for using a standard translation: ". . . concerning the *Translation*, The first part of my task was to prepare a new one out of the *Original Greek*, such as seemed to me most agreeable, and on which my present understanding of the Text is founded; and to authorize or give confidence to such an undertaking, I had in my prospect not only the two *English Translat.* . . ., but the examples also of many learned men, as well as those that live in the obedience of the *Bishop of Rome* . . . Yet considering my own great defects, the incompetencie and disproportionableness of my strength and few years consideration to the length and weight of this work, and knowing that as oft and as farre as I differed in my sense from other men, so often and in the same distance did other men differ from me; and having before my eyes, from the fate of other men's attempts in this kind, (which I could not induce myself to approve of) great reasons to forecast and foresee my own hazards, and (though not to discern, yet) to fear and suspect many midadventures therein, and so to passe that more early censure, which saw not with my partial eyes, I had cause to look for; upon these, I say, and some store of other considerations, I made choice of the course which now is taken, in stead of obtruding a new, retaining the known *Translation* of our *Bibles*, and . . . annexing, where it seemed, usefull, another *Translation* of some words or phrases . . ."
180. See A. Jülicher, Review of Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief*, 2. Auflage in neuer Bearbeitung, *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 47 (25,22) pp.537f.
181. C.K. Barrett, "The Centre of the New Testament and the Canon", *Die Mitte des Neuen Testaments*, ed. by U. Luz and H. Weder (Göttingen,

1983), p.5.

182. *Ibid.*, p.6.

183. B. Ehler, *Die Herrschaft des Gekreuzigten: Ernst Käsemanns Frage nach der Mitte der Schrift* (Berlin & New York, 1986). For a discussion of this work see appendix, p.307 below. Barrett, *op. cit.*, pp.9f, however, disputes the suitability of regarding Paul's theology as the New Testament centre: "A . . . possibility . . . is to take Paul, the first great theological interpreter of Jesus, as the centre of the New Testament. There is much to be said for this choice . . . Simply however to take Paul as the normative centre of the New Testament is open to objection. It would ignore the fact that Paul, on his own showing, was a controversial figure." Although Paul's disputes with the false apostles need not be a problem, his relation to "the original group of Jerusalem apostles" was not ideal. "The agreement was substantial but incomplete . . . Paul maintained his equality with them; he did his best to preserve unity between his Gentile churches and Jerusalem; he did not question that they were servants of Christ; he and they preached the same Gospel of the crucified and risen Jesus. But it cannot be held that he and they developed this shared message in the same theological directions. In fact, if Paul is selected as the centre of the New Testament we are probably choosing a minority element. Up to the time of his own death and the deaths of Peter and James he and his followers may well have been outnumbered by Jewish Christians who understood the Gospel in a somewhat different way; whether in the next generation anyone fully understood him and perpetuated his work on precisely the same lines is doubtful: the authors of Ephesians, Acts, the Pastorals, Clement of Rome, and Ignatius, for all their admiration of him, did not."

184. *PP*, pp.235f; *ET*, p.138.

185. *Käsemann*, p.117; *ET*, p.123.

Chapter 2

1. A further reason for discussing Deutero Isaiah is that it has been argued that Paul "seems to have had a particular predilection for Isaiah", particularly chaps. 40-55, and that a significant proportion of his quotations from these chapters occur in Romans. See C.J.A. Hickling, "Paul's Reading of Isaiah," *Studia Biblica* 1978, ed. by E.A. Livingstone, vol. 3 (Sheffield, 1980), pp.215-223.
2. W. Foerster, "κρίσω," *TDNT*, vol.3 (1965), p.1005.
3. G. von Rad, *Genesis*, trans. by J.H. Marks (revised ed., London, 1972), p.44.
4. C. Westermann, *Creation*, trans. by J.J. Scullion (London, 1974), p.12.
5. Contrary to von Rad, *op. cit.*, pp.47ff; *Old Testament Theology*, trans. by D.M.G. Stalker, vol. 1 (London, 1962), p.139; and to W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. by J.A. Baker, vol. 2 (London, 1967), p.105.
6. Westermann, *op. cit.*, pp.17-31.
7. This concept may well lie behind the fact that it is immediately after Melchizedek calls down the blessing of 'God Most High, maker of heaven and earth' on Abraham (Gen 14:19) that Abraham enters into discussion with God concerning his childlessness (15:1ff).
8. Westermann, *op.cit.*, p.56.
9. *Ibid.*, p.90.
10. *Ibid.*, p.91.
11. *Ibid.*.
12. This contrasts, for example, with the sort of view expressed by stories about the world emerging as a result of struggles between divine beings, such as in Greek and Babylonian mythology, and with Stoicism which saw God as being identified with the substance of the universe, involved in an endless cycle of nature.
13. This occurrence of different verbs for creation being used side by side, without apparent distinction in meaning, can be seen in other parts of the Old Testament, e.g. Amos 4:13; Is 27:11; 43:1; 44:2; 45:7 and especially Is 45:18.
14. Similar imagery is used for the same purpose in Is 34:11; 40:17; Jer 4:23.
15. Is 40:26,28; 41:20; 42:5; 43:1,7,15; 45:7f,12,18; 48:7; 54:16.

16. Allusion is made to Yahweh's power over chaos and the waters of the deep, Is 44:27; 50:2; 51:9f,15. In creation he stretched out the sky and laid the foundations of the earth, 40:22; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12; 48:13; 51:13; and formed the earth as a potter, 45:18. See also note 13. In addition, the potter's verb 'לָצַק' occurs frequently in relation to the creation of the people of Israel, 43:1,21; 44:2,21,24; 45:9,11; 49:5.
17. Is 40:6f.
18. Is 40:12-31; 42:8,21; 48:11; 44:6f; 45:14; 19:9.
19. Is 40:6-8,23f; 44:27; 50:2f; 51:6.
20. Is 44:24-28; 45:9-13; 48:12-15.
21. Is 41:21-29; 42:9; 43:8-13; 44:7; 45:21; 48:3ff.
22. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. by D.M.G. Stalker, vol. 2 (Edinburgh/London, 1965), p.242.
23. See also Is 48:7; 42:9; 43:19; 48:3; 45:8.
24. Is 43:1-7,21f; 51:12-16; 54:4-6.
25. Is 43:1f; 44:22f; 45:17; 51:22.
26. C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, trans. by D.M.G. Stalker (London, 1969), p.25.
27. R. Rendtorff, "Die theologische Stellung des Schöpfungsglaubens bei Deuterjesaja," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 51(1,54), pp.3-13.
28. This view is further supported when the Hebrew usage of poetic parallelism is considered.
29. Rendtorff, *op. cit.*, p.10, "in 44:2-5 dagegen war dies Nebeneinander schon in der Einleitung durchbrochen. In dem folgenden Heilsorakel selbst ist nun gar keine Trennung mehr möglich: Jahwes Heilshandeln besteht darin, dass er sich als Schöpfer erweist, indem er das Verdorrte und Erstorbene neu schafft. So ereinet sich Jahwes Schöpferhandeln *jetzt*, ja es steht sogar erst unmittelbar bevor und ist keinesweg blosse Vergangenheit. Und indem geschieht, schafft Jahwe seinem Volk das Heil. Eine vollkommenere Verschmelzung von Schöpfungsglauben und Heilsglauben ist nicht mehr denkbar."
30. Is 41:8f; 42:1-6; 44:1-5; 49:1,5,7f.
31. Rendtorff, *op.cit.*, p.12.

32. *Ibid.*, p.13: "Das gegenwärtige und noch bevorstehende Heilshandeln dieses Gottes an seinem Volk steht aber nicht nur in enger Beziehung zu diesem ganz persönlich schaffenden und erwählenden Handeln in der Vergangenheit, sondern es fällt geradezu damit zusammen. Es ist nicht nur derselbe Gott, der damals and heute handelt, sondern es ist *ein* Tun Gottes, das je und je geschieht und dem Israel sein Dasein und sein Heil verdankt."
33. Is 41:8; 51:2.
34. Is 43:2,16-19; 48:21; 51:10.
35. Also Is 41:17-20; 44:3; 51:3; 55:13; 40:4; 42:15f; 49:11.
36. Also Is 41:22; 42:9; 43:9,18; 46:9; 48:3,5.
37. Also Is 42:9; 48:6f; 41:23; 44:7f; 45:21.
38. In fact the whole created world is depicted as giving praise for the salvation of Israel, thus further underlining the close association between creation and salvation: Is 42:10f; 44:23; 49:13; 55:12.
39. See note 20. Also Is 41:2ff,25; 46:11.
40. Is 40:24; 41:11; 42:17; 44:11; 45:16,24; 49:22-26.
41. Is 43:10,12; 44:8; 55:4f.
42. Is 41:20; 45:6,14f,22f; 49:6f,22f; 52:10.
43. Is 42:14; 40:27; 41:10; 49:14-16a; 54:7,10.
44. Is 40:1f; 43:1,25; 44:22; 48:9,20; 54:7ff.
45. Is 55:8f; 40:27f.
46. Is 40:29ff.
47. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p.61.
48. Is 40:23f; 41:11f.
49. See note 34.
50. Is 49:19ff; 54:1-3.
51. Is 41:4; 44:6; 48:12.
52. See note 15.
53. S. Baruch 21:4ff; 48:2ff; Jdt 16:14; Bar 3:33; 4 Ezra 3:4f.

54. Also S. Baruch 14:17; 21:4; 48:8; Sib 3:20ff; Wis 9:1; Jub 12:4; Sir 42:15; 43:5,10,26.
55. Bar 3:35.
56. Bar 3:33f; S. Baruch 21:4ff; 48:2ff.
57. Jdt 16:14; Jub 12:4; Sir 16:26ff.
58. S. Baruch 48:2ff; Sir 42:18ff.
59. S. Baruch 21:9; 48:6f,15; Jub 12:4.
60. S. Baruch 44:6; 48:14ff; 4 Ezra 4:1ff; Sir 42:16.
61. 2 Macc 7:28.
62. Ep. Ar 139.
63. S. Baruch 48:19ff.
64. 4 Ezra 6:55ff.
65. 4 Ezra 3:4ff.
66. 4 Ezra 3:29ff; 4:23f; 6:55ff.
67. Wis 9:1; 4 Ezra 4:25; 5:33; 8:4-19; S. Baruch 48:14ff.
68. 4 Ezra 4:30.
69. S. Baruch 32:6; 44:12; 57:2; 4 Ezra 7:75; Jub 1:29; 4:26; Enoch 45:4f.
70. Jub 1:29; 4:26; S. Baruch 44:8ff; Enoch 45:4f.
71. S. Baruch 44:11f.
72. S. Baruch 32:6; 44:6.
73. S. Baruch 44:12,15; Enoch 45:5.
74. S. Baruch 44:7,12ff; 4 Ezra 7:75ff; Jub 1:29; 4:26; Enoch 45:5.
75. S. Baruch 57:1f.
76. S. Baruch 21:9; 48:6.
77. 4 Ezra 7:77.
78. Ap. 2,190.
79. Ap. 2, 192.

80. Ant. 7,380.
81. Op. Mund 7-12.
82. Op. Mund. 3.
83. Spec. Leg. 4,187; Migr. Abr. 183; Leg. All. 3,10; Mut. Nom. 46; Quis. Rer. Div. Her. 36.
84. 1QH 1:7ff,18ff,24f; 4:13; 7:13,16; 9:12,30; 12:9ff; 15:13f; 16:8.
85. 1QH 13:11f also suggests this.
86. 1QH 10:8.
87. 1QH 5:21; 7:18,32; 9:17; 10:9ff; 12:11,19,31.
88. 1QH 1:7,14,19,31; 4:13; 9:23; 13:13.
89. 1QH 1:10,30f; 3:21ff; 6:11f; 10:12,15; 13:13; 18:21f.
90. 1QH 1:8,20; 10:9.
91. 1QH 1:16ff; 15:15ff.
92. 1QH 1:23; 10:2ff; 12:28; 18:19.
93. 1QH 1:22,25,27; 4:30; 9:15ff; 11:20; 15:12f.
94. 1QH 1:21; 2:13; 4:29; 9:16; 10:3ff,12; 11:3; 12:24ff; 13:15; 15:21; 18:4,12,25ff.
95. 1QH 1:26; 12:11.
96. 1QH 1:6,26; 4:31; 11:7,18; 12:19,31; 13:19; 16:9.
97. 1QH 1:21; 2:13; 4:6,23,27; 5:9; 6:4; 10:4,15,27f; 11:4,9f,16ff; 12:12f,33; 13:3ff; 14:8ff; 18:4ff.
98. 1QH 1:28ff; 2:7; 10:7; 11:4ff,33f; 12:33; 17:17.
99. 1QH 1:32; 3:21; 6:8f; 7:14; 12:34; 17:23.
100. 1QH 1:33f; 2:24; 4:37; 11:10f.
101. 1QH 2:21ff; 4:22f,36; 5:5ff; 6:25ff; 7:6ff; 9:12f; 14:9; 18:29.
102. 1QH 2:20; 3:19f; 3:37-4:4; 5:6; 8:4ff; 9:25; 11:33ff.
103. See E. Sjöberg, "Neuschöpfung in den Toten-Meer-Rollen," *Studia Theologica*, 9(2,55), 131-136.

104. The reference to renewal of fertility as a part of the transformation (1QH 2:7), may also be an allusion to new creation, in that it parallels the blessing which accompanies creation in Genesis 1.
105. 1QH 2:8ff,21ff; 3:6ff; 4:7ff; 5:22ff; 6:23.
106. 1QH 3:17f,26ff; 4:19f,27; 6:18f,29ff; 12:16ff; 14:16; 15:17.
107. There is, however, a suggestion of universal destruction in 1QH 3:29ff, and in 8:4ff salvation is experienced as a flowering of the wilderness, which may be regarded as new creation.
108. 1QH 3:21; 4:21; 5:12; 6:31; 11:12f,22ff,30ff; 15:16.
109. *Käsemann*, p.117; ET, p.123.
110. In doing this we are not attempting to clarify meaning so much as to follow Paul's logic using his own terminology.
111. *Käsemann*, p.10; ET, p.13, argues that the title 'Son of God' is the only point of real interest to Paul in this formula. This may be true up to a point, but there can be no doubt that Paul makes use of Jesus' Jewish heritage in his argument in Rom 9, and bases much of his discussion from Rom 6 onwards on the fact that Jesus was crucified as well as raised. Käsemann's statement is acceptable only if the historical facts about Jesus are assumed.
112. C.K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London, 1962), p.19.
113. Cf., 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:2 (ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις); 1 Thess 1:1 (τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ).
114. *Käsemann*, p.13; ET, p.15, also notes that this is not markedly different in meaning from κλητοῖς ἁγίοις. However, οἱ ἅγιοι is Paul's usual term for believers and was presumably meaningful to both Jewish and Gentile Christians.
115. Käsemann's comment, *ibid.*, that ἐν πᾶσιν "indicates the cosmic scope" would seem to contradict his understanding of ἔθνη as 'Gentiles'.
116. He makes four claims to authority: Servant of Jesus Christ; called to be an apostle; set apart for the gospel of God; through whom we have received grace and apostleship.
117. See for example *Käsemann*, pp.16ff; ET, pp.18ff.
118. According to Käsemann, p.3; ET, p.5, δοῦλος is "the honorific title of the OT men of God. . . . This title expresses . . . election as well as submission of an instrument to the will of God."

119. Käsemann, p.8; ET, p.10, associates Jesus' sonship with the idea of him being the image of God: "Jesus is God's Son as the one who was of the divine nature and like God (Phil 2:6) or who was God (Jn 1:1). The NT interest focuses on the function of the *eikōn* of God, whether generally as the incomparable revealer or specifically as the mediator of the first or of the eschatological creation."
120. Jesus' institution as the Son of God by his resurrection, as an act of the spirit of holiness, may also be seen as a creative act of God, cf. Gen 1:2.
121. "in order that he himself may be known and glorified" according to C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1 (6th ed.; Edinburgh, 1975), p.67.
122. Käsemann, p.17; ET, p.20.
123. *Ibid.*, p.18; ET, p.20.
124. Or, according to the gospel, he together with his Son.
125. Käsemann, p.26; ET, p.29.
126. Cf. note 119 above.
127. See for example Käsemann, p.34; ET, p.38; Cranfield, *op.cit.*, pp.105ff; Barrett, *op.cit.*, pp.31ff.
128. 3:9 would appear to confirm this view.
129. In the Qumran writings it is suggested that to witness to the will, power and glory of the Creator is, in fact, the ultimate purpose of the creation. This is not natural theology as such. The point is not so much that we see God in nature, but that nature makes plain his power and majesty which demands acknowledgement.
130. That wisdom is unique to the Creator is also emphasized in the earlier traditions.
131. Cf., Gen 3:5; 6:1-4; 11:1-9 and pp.58 above.
132. In 1:17 the gospel is said to reveal the righteousness of God. In 1:18 it is said to reveal the wrath of God. Käsemann argues that these two things are revealed simultaneously, one being the reverse side of the other. When we see this in connection with our understanding of the wrath of God it becomes clear that the righteousness of God is fundamentally to do with his power and right as Creator. See also Käsemann, p.52; ET, p.56.
133. *Ibid.*, p.39; ET, p.43. Cranfield also recognizes the simultaneous revelation of righteousness and wrath which the gospel brings, and their inseparability, but fails to grasp the radical nature of this revelation.

134. Rom 2:5ff.
135. We note that in Genesis the death penalty is not immediately carried out. Man is simply expelled from the garden, alienated from God and left to be his own master. In Chapter 4 we will see that there is a sense in which this punishment can be described as death.
136. Käsemann's assertion, p.50; ET, p.54, that Paul here has Jews, and not Jewish Christians, in mind, seems unlikely to be correct. The passage must surely be read in the context of what precedes, and be seen as a further elaboration of what has been revealed in the gospel. Further, the rhetoric of the diatribe style would be pointless if it was not addressed to those who would hear it, namely the Roman Christians.
137. That knowing God is the basis for counting on his kindness is indicated in Wis 15:1ff. This does not, however, mean that Paul is referring to a situation before or outside the gospel. If this was assumed by ordinary Jews, it would still be assumed by Jewish Christians as well. 2:16, and the whole context, make it clear that it is the eschatological judgement as he now understands it that Paul is discussing.
138. That this is righteous judgement points once more to the simultaneous revelation of righteousness and wrath, and to the interrelation of God's righteousness and his creative power. See Käsemann, p.52; ET, p.56.
139. We note here that Paul does not say 'death', which would be the obvious parallel to 'eternal life' and consistent with what is deserved (1:32). To anticipate the next chapter, the reason for this is that God is a God who justifies the ungodly. While the way one has lived one's life does not pass unnoticed, the assessment of this is a judgement of works, which is quite separate from one's justification which saves one from condemnation and the deserved death penalty. If this were not so, then justification *would* be by works—a belief that Paul and Käsemann go to considerable lengths to refute. We regard this as further evidence against Käsemann's claim that Rom 2 is addressed to non-believing Jews, or concerns the situation prior to or outside the coming of Christ.
140. See for example von Rad, *Genesis*, p.201, and W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. by J.A. Baker, vol. 1 (London, 1961), pp.56ff. Eichrodt also suggests that within the P tradition keeping the law was regarded as appropriation of the covenant rather than as a duty which was part of the covenant itself. This is consistent with our understanding that keeping the law meant above all acknowledging God as God.
141. I.e. acknowledged God as God, according to our interpretation of 2:12-16.
142. Though perhaps not in the Judaism of Paul's time: see for example Käsemann, p.67; ET, pp.72f; Cranfield, *op.cit.*, p.172. On the other hand,

in the context of eschatological judgement, the Apocrypha and Qumran drew a line between righteous Jews who would be saved, and the wicked, both Jews and Gentiles, who would be destroyed.

143. Käsemann maintains that the Jews' attitude was that the Torah was "the one possibility of access to God", p.65; ET, p.70, and that circumcision *granted* a share in the covenant, p.67; ET, p.72. This leads Käsemann to the conclusion that they believed in legal piety which is in direct antithesis to justification by faith, so that those who kept the law remained part of the old aeon, and only Gentile Christians would be found to be true Jews, pp.71ff; ET, pp.75ff. Recent studies of Judaism, such as that of E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London, 1977), indicate that it is fairer to say that it was justification by faith that provided the Jew with access to God, and that the Torah was only the means of indicating and maintaining this access. Understood this way, law keeping Jews would not *necessarily* be excluded from the new aeon by their obedience to it. As we understand it, it is only in the context of Jewish Christians believing *Gentile* believers should keep the law that Paul speaks of works righteousness. His argument is that their attitude *implies* that they believe in works righteousness, which, as he demonstrates, is contrary to Judaism as well as to the gospel, as our discussion of 3:21-4:25 suggests.
144. Thus we reject Käsemann's view that Paul is attacking Judaism as such. Rather, he is attacking the *attitude* of Jewish Christians towards the Gentiles.
145. There is no clear evidence of the Roman Christians Judaizing along the lines referred to in Galatians. The arguments that suggest the Jewish Christians were criticizing Gentile Christianity, or claiming precedence for themselves, do nevertheless allow us to postulate some pressure, direct or indirect, on the Gentiles formally to enter and participate in ordinary Judaism.
146. There is no need to suppose, as Käsemann, pp.73f; ET, p.78, appears to, that Paul is here making a grudging concession to Judaism.
147. Käsemann, p.77; ET, p.82.
148. See notes 132 and 138 above.
149. Here Paul specifically includes himself as a Jew, and so reinforces our view that he is addressing Jewish Christians, and not just condemning Judaism in general before a purely Gentile audience. As in 1:2-4, it is important to establish common ground with his hearers at a point where he is making his strongest arguments against them.
150. There are textual and interpretative problems with *προεχόμεθα* and *οὐ πάντως*. It is possible to conclude that Paul asks whether the Jews are at a *disadvantage*, and/or that his answer is 'not altogether'. The context,

- however, is so specifically directed towards showing that the Jews stand on the same footing as the Gentiles, that the interpretation given seems the most suitable one for Paul's polemic at this point. See Cranfield, *op. cit.*, pp.187ff, for a detailed discussion of the problems.
151. ὑπ' ἁμαρτίαν, literally 'under sin', in contrast to being under the Lordship of the Creator, i.e., under the power of God, is more expressively translated 'under the power of sin'.
 152. We can take 'law' here to be interchangeable with 'scripture', consistent with the context and rabbinic usage, since "the OT has its material centre in the Torah as the declaration of God's will in the strictest sense." (Käsemann, p.82; ET, p.87)
 153. This interpretation, that knowledge of sin, ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας, can be equated with coming under it's power, is supported by the widely held view that τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπίγνωσει in 1:28 means to acknowledge God, which, as we have seen, involves allowing oneself to be put under his power.
 154. Paul does not specifically say this but was no doubt familiar with the tradition, for example from Deutero Isaiah. That he accepts this, at least now, if not before his conversion, is indicated by his argument in Rom 4, especially 4:9-17.
 155. We are of the opinion that this summary indicates Paul's message independent of the historical situation. The gospel reveals what God does for man, simultaneously bringing home to him the fact that he is in need. Paul's critical discussion of Judaism is not part and parcel of the gospel itself. Rather, this aspect of Romans is an argument logically worked out at the prompting of a concrete situation needing to be resolved. Paul's concern is not to explain the gospel as such, but to use what is common knowledge to his hearers, drawing out its logical consequences to show them the absurdity of their position. In this part of the epistle, in response to the concrete historical situation, Paul shows how the specific claims to advantage or security advanced or assumed by Jewish Christians are logically inconsistent with the gospel. As foreshadowed by 1:2-4, Paul needs to show his hearers that, although the gospel is consistent with Judaism, it is also something radically new. We infer from this that Paul is addressing himself to a situation in which it was believed that Judaism had precedence over and was essential for Christianity. Paul effectively turns this on its head by showing that it is the gospel which has precedence over Judaism, not because it does more for man than Judaism could, but that it does it so much more effectively. See also pp.83, 85 above.
 156. This would seem to be Paul's emphasis, in view of the context.

157. There is a sense in which the story in Gen 18:22f, of Abraham bargaining with God over the proposed destruction of Sodom, parallels this understanding of justification by faith. In that story, God is persuaded to spare the whole city for the sake of a very small number of righteous men, if he should find any. Here God spares the whole person for the sake of the very limited measure of righteousness that faith in his particular action in Jesus Christ constitutes.
158. The idea that God 'passed over former sins' does not really fit Paul's understanding of sin. In accordance with the preceding chapters of the epistle, a more Pauline formulation would be that God had found a way of overcoming the distortion of men's minds, of breaking through the power of sin, so that men could see what had become hidden to them.
159. Käsemann's suggestion, pp.89ff; ET, pp.95ff, that Paul here quotes a Jewish Christian tradition, then modifies it to make his particular point seems to make sense. The language certainly has a Jewish flavour and non-Pauline elements. In addition, Paul does not attempt to explain what it means, but simply elaborates what is achieved. If there were Jewish Christians in Rome, and if in chaps. 2-4 Paul is addressing them in particular, then this passage can be seen as another instance of Paul making a crucial point by establishing common ground and at the same time radically extending the meaning. Cranfield rejects Käsemann's analysis, but his own conclusion, "Paul recognizes that what was at stake was not just God's being seen to be righteous: but God's *being* righteous. God would not *be* righteous, if he neglected to show himself to be righteous: it is essential to his being the righteous, the loving and merciful God, that he should show that he is righteous" (*op.cit.*, p.213) is certainly unsatisfactory, both in itself and in the light of Paul's preceding argument. God *is* righteous. He should not and does not need to prove it. He chooses to reveal it in contradiction to all reasonable expectation, in order to counteract the mess mankind has made of his life and his world, so that *God* can achieve *his* will for his creation.
160. An attempt to take 'the law of faith' to mean the OT law (e.g. Cranfield, *op.cit.*, p.220) would seem to be misguided in that Paul's reference is clearly to faith in Jesus Christ. Even when he points to the faith of Abraham in Rom 4 he makes it quite clear that this was something quite distinct from and preceding the law. It is a *prototype* of the nature of faith, but the possibility of having the same object of faith has been lost through the distortion brought about by the law. What the gospel reveals is the possibility of having faith in Jesus Christ as an alternative, and now the only alternative, for those who wish to be saved from the wrath of God.
161. It may be that Paul's 'we' here in fact refers to Jews as distinct from believers, so that his argument in chap. 4 is an elaboration of 3:28 rather than a fresh argument. J.D.G. Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of the University of Manchester* 65

(2,83), p.104, interprets the similar assertion in Gal 2:16 as being a reference to Judaism rather than Christianity.

162. Kidd. 4:14. Cited by Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.227.
163. It could be argued that Abraham's righteousness was a consequence rather than a cause of his being reckoned righteous. By accepting the Creator's Lordship he would have been freed from the power of sin, according to the converse of the argument in 1:18ff. That, however, is not the point Paul is wanting to make here.
164. In fact the law, instead of him who gave it.
165. This quotation agrees with the possibility but not necessarily the exclusivity of Paul's claim that God justifies the ungodly. Psalm 32 speaks in fact of the forgiveness of the godly, so again the argument is not indisputably supported by scripture, from a Jewish point of view.
166. Gen 12:17; 13:14f; 15:7,18ff; 17:8; 24:7. Likewise, when the promise is passed on to Isaac, Gen 26:3f, it is possession of the land he occupies that he is promised.
167. von Rad, *op. cit.*, pp.242f.
168. *Ibid.*, p.200.
169. G. von Rad, "The Promised Land and Yahweh's Land in the Hexateuch," *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. by E. Dicken (Edinburgh & London, 1966), pp.85ff.
170. *Ibid.*, p.91.
171. *Ibid.*, pp.92f.
172. The promise to Abraham is specifically mentioned in S. Baruch 21:19-25; 57:1. Other references speak simply of things promised: S. Baruch 14:12f; 51:3; 4 Ezra 4:26f; 5:40; 7:60.119.
173. H. Conzelmann and W. Zimmerli, "χάρις," *TDNT*, vol. 9 (1974), p.377.
174. נָתַן, the noun cognate with נָתַן, refers to the effect on the recipient and thus takes on a somewhat different meaning (*ibid.*, pp.379ff) which is not relevant to Paul's usage here.
175. *Ibid.*, p.384.
176. The structure of this verse is difficult. It is not clear from the grammar whether Paul means Abraham is the father of many nations in God's sight, or that Abraham, whom God made father of many nations, had faith before

God. The former is not inconsistent with Paul's view but seems an unnecessary and unlikely qualification to the assertion. It also runs the danger of spiritualizing the concept in a way that ignores the interplay of physical and eschatological and takes the onus off Paul's readers to acknowledge the concrete reality of his claim and its consequences. The latter structure is to be preferred, partly because of this, but also because the sentence marks the transition from the discussion of the role of faith to illustration of the nature of faith.

177. Käsemann, pp.117f; ET, p.124; Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.246.

178. The formulation in 4:25 is very likely traditional and ought not to be seen to divide too sharply the two aspects of what happened in the death and resurrection of Jesus. As in 3:24ff, the one depends on the other. Somehow in the death of Jesus God finds a way of dealing with man's failure which is made known in the resurrection.

179. Here, for the first time since the introduction, Jesus is described as 'our Lord'. Presumably this is possible only because he has the status of Son of God. It may even be that God, who, as Creator, has sole right to Lordship, recognizing man's inclinations to accord lordship to the creature rather than the Creator, does what he does in Jesus in order to provide men with a means of placing themselves under something known and seen in a way that does not at the same time cut them off from him.

180. Käsemann, pp.53ff; ET, pp.57ff.

181. *Ibid.*, p.54; ET, p.58.

182. Dunn, *op. cit.*, in his discussion of Gal 2:16, similarly attributes the origin of the antithesis between works and faith to this sort of situation. He, however, limits 'works of the law' to circumcision, food laws and keeping Jewish regulation feasts. While these may have been the issues over which the question arose, it seems an unnecessary limitation to Paul's meaning. In our view, Paul's argument against exclusivist insistence on keeping the law can be applied to the Torah in its broadest sense, including all its provisions for guilt offerings and forgiveness.

183. Käsemann, p.96; ET, p.102.

184. This variant is to be preferred in view of the context, as Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.102; Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.257 note 1; Käsemann, p.124; ET, pp.132f argue.

185. See note 174 above.

186. Cf., 1:23.

187. Käsemann, p.127; ET, p.135.

188. *Ibid.*, pp.135ff; ET, pp.144ff, suggests that it is in their roles as establishers of world order that Jesus and Adam are to be likened.
189. This suggests an indifference to sin, or even exaltation in it, perhaps in the belief that such an attitude indicated strength of faith, on the part of some Roman Christians, most likely Gentiles, since Paul has argued so extensively against imposition of the law on the Gentiles, an approach against this attitude more likely to have been advocated by Jewish Christians.
190. Cf., 4:20.
191. In contrast to the situation described in 1:28-31.
192. Käsemann rejects the idea that development is contained within sanctification, and he may be right. However, if this is understood as increasing receptivity to God's righteousness through this very gift, the dangers Käsemann noted of self affirmation or striving for Christian perfection are avoided. The idea of Abraham becoming stronger in faith, and the comparison here with those under sin becoming increasingly sinful would seem to allow such a view.
193. Käsemann rejects the view that the addressees are Jewish and that the situation described is that of believers. He sees the chapter largely as further polemic against the law in particular, and the pious in general. We believe, however, that our interpretation fits the context and accounts for the first person and seemingly sympathetic tone more satisfactorily than does Käsemann's.
194. It is arguable that until God's glory is shared and displayed universally, it cannot be seen fully.
195. Included in this praise is an acknowledgement of the difficulty of fully understanding just what God is doing. For all his argument, in the end Paul has to admit that, while he can observe what is happening and so speculate, no doubt with some accuracy, as to the ways God works and why, no-one can really understand. Fundamental to the nature of faith is trust that God can and will do what he promises, even when his methods are incomprehensible and his intentions impossible from a human point of view to execute. Thus this hymn of praise to the creator intrinsically affirms that he is the God who creates out of nothing.

Chapter 3

1. N.M. Watson, "Some Observations on the Use of *δικαιω* in the Septuagint," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 79(1960), p.266; J A Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul* (Cambridge, 1972), p.67.
2. C. Westermann, *Genesis*, vol.2 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1981), pp.263.
3. *Ibid.*, pp.263ff.
4. G von Rad, "Faith Reckoned as Righteousness," *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. by E.W.T. Dicken (Edinburgh & London, 1966), pp.125-130.
5. Num 18:27; Prov 27:14; Job 13:24; 19:11; 33:10; 41:27.
6. Cf. the use of *λογίζομαι* in Ps 32:2 (LXX) where the usage parallels that in Gen 15:6.
7. G von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. by D.M.G. Stalker, vol.1 (Edinburgh & London, 1962), p.379. This appears to be a change in position from that expressed in von Rad's essay, "Faith Reckoned as Righteousness," *op. cit.*, p.129, where, on the basis of Gen 15:6, he suggests that "only faith . . . brings man into right relationship [with Yahweh]."
8. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol.1, p.370.
9. Cf., Jer 31:29f.
10. G. Quell, "δίκη," *TDNT*, vol.2 (1964), p.176. The close association here of God giving men their existence, i.e., creating them and maintaining them in that existence, with his righteousness and the righteous law he gives, forming the "perfect whole" of God's action, supports the thesis that righteousness, creation and giving life are all ways of speaking about any one act of God. Similarly, the linking of rescue and preservation with righteousness indicates the concurrency of these concepts.
11. This understanding follows the first person of the Hebrew text, *אֲנִי יְהוָה אֲסֵבֶנְךָ עַד עוֹלָם*. The LXX has instead, *καὶ οὐ δικαιώσεις τὸν ἄσεβη ἕνεκεν δώρων*, thus taking the clause as a further instruction, connected with what follows, and eliminating the causal sense. As J.P. Hyatt, *Exodus* (London, 1971), p.246, notes, "This could be correct; however, Yahweh speaks in the first person several times in this section (22:23f; 27:31; 23:13)."
12. Such as are set out in Lev 1-7.

13. The book of Isaiah, as we have it, is the result of a complex process of redaction carried out by successive generations of prophets over more than two centuries, so that it is not possible to isolate exactly which material can be attributed to Isaiah himself. It seems probable, however, that a general impression of the substance of his message can be gleaned. O. Kaiser, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, trans. by J. Sturdy (from the revised 2nd ed. with revisions by the author to 1973, Oxford, 1975), p.223, notes, "The historical prophet Isaiah was neither a preacher of repentance nor a man who one day proclaimed the deliverance and the next day the ruin of his nation, but consistently announced the coming disaster as an unalterable act of punishment by Yahweh (cf., e.g., 5:1ff with 22:1-4, 12-14). The picture of the preacher of repentance and exhorter goes back only to an editor of the words of the prophet at work in the exilic or early post exilic period." Something of the redaction process is discussed in O.Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, trans. by J. Bowden (2nd ed. from 5th German ed., London, 1983), pp.7ff.
14. Is 42:18-25; 43:26-28; 48:18f.
15. C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, trans. by D.M.G. Stalker (London, 1969), pp.17f.
16. See pp.64ff above.
17. Is 44:22f; 40:1f; 43:1f; 45:17; 48:9,20; 51:22; 54:7ff.
18. Is 41:9f; 44:5,21; 51:16; 52:6.
19. Is 40:9; 41:10,13,14; 43:1,5; 44:2,8; 54:4. Also 51:12f as a rhetorical question.
20. Is 44:22; 55:1-7.
21. Is 40:2; 43:25; 44:22;54:9b; 55:7b.
22. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p.18.
23. Is 43:25; 48:9,11; 43:4; 49:15; 54:6ff; 40:5; 41:20; 43:7,21; 45:6,14,23; 49:26.
24. Is 40:2,9f; 41:2,25; 45:1-7; 40:29-31; 41:1,10,11ff; 42:13; 43:1-7,14ff; 44:9ff; 45:14-17; 46:1-4; 47; 48:17f,22ff; 51:11; 52:1ff.
25. Is 40:4; 41:15f; 43:2,16-21; 45:2; 49:9-11; 55:12f; 41:17-20; 44:3; 48:21; 51:3; 55:1f.
26. Is 44:3f; 49:19-21; 51:2; 54:1-3.
27. Although this passage is expressed in the past tense, it can also be regarded as a prescription for the future, thus indicating that the keeping of the commandments was still regarded as part and parcel of what was expected of Israel. Westermann in his commentary, *Isaiah 40-66*, p.203, actually

regards this passage as a forward-looking wish, rather than as a regret about the past.

28. For a fuller discussion of this point, see J.J. Scullion, "sedeq-sedaqah in Isaiah cc.40-66 with special reference to the continuity in meaning between Second and Third Isaiah," *Ugarit-Forschungen*, 3(1971), pp.340f.
29. Is 41:16; 43:12; 44:23; 45:25; 51:3.
30. Is 40:5; 41:20; 42:12; 45:6,14,22f; 46:13; 49:3,26; 55:5.
31. Is 44:23; 52:9. See p.81 above.
32. In particular, Tobit, Wisdom of Solomon, 1 Baruch, Prayer of Manasses, Jubilees, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, 4 Ezra.
33. Also T. Gad 6:10, "For by what things a man transgresseth, by the same also is he punished."
34. The idea that one can afford to be merciful when one is powerful also occurs in The Letter of Aristeas 194.
35. Damascus Rule, G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 2nd revised ed. (Harmondsworth, 1968), pp.106f.
36. 1QH 1:21ff; 3:24; 10:3ff; 12:24ff; 18:26ff; *et passim*.
37. 1QH 4:30f; 7:17; 9:14f; 12:19; 13:16f; 15:12; 16:11.
38. 1QH 1:28-2:30; 8:4ff; 14:25f; Dam 2:14ff; *et passim*, cf., the failure of the wicked to respond, 1QH 4:17f; 5:22ff; 6:19ff; *et passim*.
39. 1QH 1:32; 2:6,20-36; 3:37-4:4; 5:5-19; 6:25ff; 7:6-10; *et passim*.
40. 1QH 9:13,33f; 10:21; 11:9,29ff; 17:12ff.
41. 1QH 1:29ff; 4:28ff; 6:10ff; 11:27f; 18:21ff.
42. See also 1QH 7:26-33; 9:38-10:12; 11:3-6; 13:14-16; 18:19-30; *et passim*.
43. H. Strack & P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, vol.3 (Munich, 1954), pp.186ff.
44. Kid 82a; Yom 28b. This conclusion is reached on the basis of Gen 26:4 rather than Gen 15:6.
45. Gen R. 39:3.
46. Gen R. 39:8.
47. Mek on Ex 14:31.

48. Above, p.142.
49. Gen R. 39:6.
50. For a fuller treatment of how this concept can be, or has been, understood, see, H. St. J. Thackeray, *The Relation of St Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought* (London, 1900), pp.80ff; S. Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (London, 1909), pp.170-198; A. Marmorstein, *The Doctrine of Merits in Old Rabbinic Literature* (London, 1920); W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London, 1948), pp.268-273.
51. E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London, 1977), pp.33ff.
52. Schechter, *op. cit.*, p.170; Davies, *op. cit.*, p.272.
53. Cited from R.A. Stewart, *Rabbinic Theology* (Edinburgh & London, 1961), p.184.
54. *Op. cit.*, p.157. Sanders supports his statement with a number of quotations from rabbinic writings, *ibid.*, pp.157ff. The actual means of atonement need not concern us here, but are discussed by Sanders, *ibid.*, pp.157-180; Schechter, *op. cit.*, pp.293-343; A. Büchler, *Studies in Sin and Atonement* (London, 1928).
55. Mishnah Yoma 8:9.
56. Kid 40a-40b.
57. P. K 24:6.
58. P. K 24:7, paralleled in Jer. Mak 31d.
59. Sanh 97b-98a.
60. In particular, most of the Rabbinic literature is significantly later than Paul.
61. In the cases of Abraham and Moses God's action was designed to set his purposes in motion rather than to counteract an obstacle, though the telling of these stories does date from a later age when the point is likely to have been to emphasize God's ability to bring about that which he desires and promises, despite seemingly insurmountable difficulties.
62. Käsemann, p.117; ET, p.123.
63. P.77 above.
64. Pp.140,149, 146, 151, 153, 156, 158, 165, 166.
65. P.80 above.

66. Pp.148ff above.
67. This interpretation is advocated, in one form or another, by C.K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London, 1962), p.31; *op. cit.*, p.100; Käsemann, p.28; ET, p.31.
68. P.166 above.
69. Käsemann, p.31; ET, p.35.
70. P.144 above.
71. Pp.81ff above.
72. This development of the situation is described in temporal terms in order to emphasize the logic of the argument. It is not intended to postulate a series of stages in the history of mankind, but to try to present a picture of the situation as it is seen from the framework of the relationship between God and man.
73. In a sense we could say that from the point of view of the relationship man opted for he was allowed to behave in a manner appropriate to those relationships and was therefore 'righteous' within the particular context.
74. P.82 above.
75. P.155 above.
76. P.83 above.
77. Chapter 4, note 69.
78. In view of what Paul has established in 1:18ff, in practice the only people to whom this option is available, as far as we know or are concerned with, are the Jews, who have been given the opportunity through the torah, and Christians, who receive the opportunity with the gospel.
79. Pp.174ff above.
80. This would certainly make more sense of the suggestion that Gentiles can honour God without the torah, since otherwise, on Paul's argument in 1:18ff, this, presumably, would have been impossible.
81. Conversely, disobedience may or may not be an expression of the rejection of God's lordship. In Genesis 3 the story of the fall is clearly about a challenge to God's ultimate lordship, whereas the whole system of repentance and forgiveness assumes disobedience to particular instructions need not be intended as fundamental rejection of the lord's right to authority.
82. P.176 above.

83. Pp.155-159 above.

84. Although this favour was acknowledged in all humility, as totally undeserved, there was also an element of exalting over those not included in the community. The rejoicing in being elect focussed not only on the relationship with God, but also on not being one of the wicked. This attitude appears throughout the Qumran psalms. The passage,

I thank thee, O God,
for Thou hast not cast my lot
in the congregation of vanity,
nor hast Thou placed my portion
in the council of the cunning. (1QH 7:34)

may be regarded as a representative example. There are also regular references to the foolishness and weakness of outsiders compared with the knowledge and strength God gives those whom he has chosen to justify. It may be that this sort of attitude is the Qumran equivalent of the boasting of which Paul accuses the Jewish Christians.

85. Mishna Yoma 8:9.

86. Pp.143, 145, 147 above.

87. P.154 above.

88. *Op. cit.*, p.157, cited above p.163.

89. P.176. Cf. Chapter 3, p.85. The notion that God justifies the ungodly, and that this was what he was doing in creating Israel, enables us to understand the Jewish attitude with more depth than was possible through the notion of creation alone.

90. I.e., Judaism.

91. P.85 above.

92. Käsemann, p.71; ET, p.75 draws the same conclusion: "What is weighed as a possibility until v.28 ceases to be understood as a mere fiction in v.29. There is a true Jew who fulfils the law even as a Gentile while Jews do not do so. He exist in the form of a Gentile-Christian The Spirit allows him to fulfil the law according to 8:4 and integrates him into the new divine covenant according to 2 Cor 3:6."

93. Käsemann, p.73; ET, p.78, says, "As if taking a breath before stating his conclusion, Paul finds a place for two objections." We would argue, however, that although we have here a refreshing change of style, this passage plays an essential part in Paul's logic in establishing the relationship between Judaism and the law, and the gospel.

94. Barrett, *op. cit.*, pp.61,63; M. Black, *Romans* (London, 1962), p.61; Cranfield, *op. cit.*, pp.177,183; Käsemann, pp.73,77; ET, pp.78,82.
95. See p.147 above; Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, pp.17f.
96. This passage in fact offers a remarkable parallel to Rom 2:6ff, with the p.146, we suggested that it set out an understanding of God as a God who justifies the ungodly. There, as in Rom 2:17ff, the assertion that the reverse of this, that God does not justify those regarded as righteous, if they transgress, is as offensive as the original assertion. Logically, of course, such 'righteous' then join the ranks of the ungodly, so have equal access to justification, provided they meet the specified requirements.
97. Cf., Chapter 2, note 155
98. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.177. This view, supported by Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.62, is consistent with our suggestion that the charge is directed against God, on the basis of Paul's conclusions about him, rather than against Paul himself.
99. Käsemann, p.74; ET, p.78, speaks of "the radical demolition of Jewish privileges in what precedes," but in our view it is only a wrongly perceived understanding and expectation of these privileges that Paul has demolished, in order to show their true nature in the continuing argument about what it is that God requires of man.
100. This understanding therefore rejects the view that Paul was starting out on a list of advantages which he never got around to completing, cf., Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.62; Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.178; Black, *op. cit.*, p.62. Rather, we would see the 'first' of v.2 and the 'then' of v.3 as being related to the two questions, the validity of the Old Testament, and the faithfulness of God.
101. Combining the imagery of Genesis with Paul's account in Rom 1:18ff of the wrath of God, it could be said that God offers to this race, which he has selected out of a whole world of ungodly men, the sort of life that is depicted in the garden of Eden, with the command to keep the law paralleling the command not to eat out of the tree in the midst of the garden (Gen 3:3). In the garden, to honour God was to acknowledge his ultimate lordship as creator by being obedient to this command. In Judaism, to honour God was to acknowledge him as creator and lord of the nation by being obedient to his law.
102. Käsemann's assertion, p.74; ET, p.79, that the reference here, as in Rom 1:2 and 3:21b, is to the promise of the gospel as contained in the Old Testament, seems not only irrelevant to the present argument, but contrary to it, since we understand Paul to be claiming an advantage for the Jews irrespective of the gospel. It is the gospel which gives rise to the debate, and the 'But now' of 3:21b suggests that something new, over and against the Old Testament understanding, has come to light with the gospel.

103. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.180, considers that ἀπιστία refers primarily to unbelief. Paul is saying the Jews in question did not believe 'the oracles of God', rather than that they were unfaithful to these oracles. This would seem to be upheld by the argument in Deutero-Isaiah. At the same time, Cranfield reminds us of the inward connection of these: "The Jews' unbelief was also, as a matter of fact, unfaithfulness to the covenant; and Paul may well, while referring primarily to their unbelief, have had also in mind the thought of their unfaithfulness." That this is the case seems to be confirmed by Paul's movement from this point to that of transgression within the covenant, as discussed below.
104. A.F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge, 1910), p.690.
105. Käsemann, p.76; ET, p.80.
106. *Ibid.*, p.76; ET, p.81.
107. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.183, suggests that Paul might have chosen to quote the Davidic psalm as "an outstanding example of God's faithfulness in the face of grievous sin." In view, however, of the way Paul is conducting the trial proving that God is just by demonstrating the Jew's injustice, and hence leaving him with no ground to stand on, it seems more likely that Paul refers to David in order to show that even this most respected of Jews recognized the justice of God's judging him for his sin and transgressions against the law.
108. That the idea of lordship is involved is supported by M. Dahood, *Psalms II* (The Anchor Bible; New York, 1968), pp.2f, who comments that, "The traditional rendition of p^esha'āy by 'my transgressions' (RSV) is, within the context of this psalm and of current American English, altogether too pallid. The fundamental notion expressed by the verb pāsha is 'to rebel, revolt'." Dahood goes on to cite examples of the noun which show the meaning to be 'acts of rebellion of the gravest nature' or 'violation of the covenant oath'.
109. Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, p.289.
110. *Ibid.*, p.290.
111. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.182, note 4.
112. Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.63, also sees here a reference to a court scene.
113. Käsemann, p.76; ET, p.81.
114. *Ibid.*
115. *Ibid.*, p.73; ET, p.79.
116. *Ibid.*, p.75; ET, pp79f.

117. This interpretation is given by Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.63, Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.183. Käsemann, p.78; ET, pp.82f, goes so far as to see it as refutation of specific attacks on Paul's doctrine of justification of the ungodly, again, in our view, anticipating what is to come and prematurely reading it back into the argument, whereas it is only the more personal remark in v.8 that invites this. Thus it would see more likely that it is the argument of vv.5-8 which prompts Paul to self-defence, rather than the conclusion drawn in vv.1-4.
118. Despite the assertions commented on in notes 93 and 117, Käsemann, pp.80f; ET, pp.84f, does in fact acknowledge in his concluding comments that vv.1-8 as a whole is a preparation for what follows, and not simply a digression.
119. *Ibid.*, p.74; ET, p.79.
120. Käsemann, p.78; ET, p.83, referring to D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (1956), pp.394ff, suggests, "the apostle might have been following a fixed rabbinic tradition which uses לִי וְלָכֵן 'in some sense, *sit venia verbo*', to show that statements which sound blasphemous are not being advanced seriously."
121. Cf., 1:18ff.
122. Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.64, recognizes this as a possible interpretation, but prefers the view that Paul is declaring the judge of the world *must* be just. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.185, and Käsemann, p.78; ET, p.83, take the same view. While we would agree that such a declaration is true, it seems to us to be a generalisation which fails to take account of the context. As our interpretation indicates, Paul is taking his readers through a series of steps, which follow in logical sequence, in order to demonstrate that it is not God who is unjust for treating the Jews the same as the Gentiles, because as far as this question is concerned, the Jews are no different from the Gentiles.
123. See pp.144f above.
124. Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.64.
125. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.185.
126. Käsemann, pp.78f; ET, pp.83f.
127. Käsemann, p.79; ET, p.83, seems to have lost sight of this when he paraphrases the question: "Why does [God] insist on judging the person who is unmasked as a sinner, a rebel?" According to our understanding, the process works the other way around.
128. This may account for the change from the second person to the first person. The objector no longer speaks as representative of the Jews as a special case, and instead speaks of himself as representative of all humanity.

129. In our view, Käsemann, p.79; ET, p.83, by claiming that, "it is clear from v.4 on that Paul is no longer dealing with the Jews but is simply taking the Jews as examples of mankind and extending the covenant to creation," has missed the subtlety of the argument in this passage, whereby Paul has followed a step by step process of establishing common ground with the Jews and then taking it from under their feet, so that, far from treating them as examples of mankind from the beginning, he only now in v.7 has led them to a position of recognizing themselves as being *no different* from the rest of mankind. Our view is supported by the fact that, despite the assertion just quoted, Käsemann, *ibid.*, p.80; ET, p.84, says that Paul has now shown the Jew to belong to the ungodly, and that 3:9ff is addressed to Jews. Käsemann offers no explanation of why he thinks Paul switches from speaking specifically to Jews, to generalisations, and then back again.
130. *Ibid.*, p.79; ET, p.84.
131. *Ibid.*, *et passim*.
132. Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.65.
133. Käsemann, p.79; ET, p.84. In fact, as we have indicated in note 117 above, Käsemann sees the whole of vv.5-8 as objections against Paul's teaching, which Käsemann finds already in vv.1-4, rather than as a continuation of the same argument, presented, as we understand it, as a trial in which God is charged with being unjust. Even so, he sees a distinct break between vv.5-7, which could well be Paul's own construction of a diatribe, and v.8 in which he says Paul "complains . . . that ideas which he regarded as blasphemous were being urged as necessary deductions from his message." (*Ibid.*)
134. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.187.
135. Käsemann, *op. cit.*.
136. For details of the grammatical problems and difficulties in the interpretation of this verse, see Barrett, *op. cit.*, pp.66f; Cranfield, *op. cit.*, pp.187ff.
137. Käsemann, p.81; ET, p.86, says, "ἁμαρτία in the singular, which is characteristically Pauline, always means . . . the power of sin." (RSV; Barrett, *op.cit.*, p.68; Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.191, all take the same interpretation, which is, of course, consistent with 1:18ff). We do not, however, agree with Käsemann, *ibid.*, that "The reality of the world is determined by being subject to this power and hence delivered up to God's wrath." Our interpretation of 1:18ff is that man being subject to sin is the expression rather than the cause, of God's wrath. Sin is the evidence that a man has *been* "delivered up to God's wrath." See discussion of 3:12ff below.
138. See Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.69; Cranfield, *op. cit.*, pp.191ff; Käsemann, *Romans*, pp.81f; ET, p.86f; for some details of the debate.

139. We see no basis here for Käsemann's statement, p.82; ET, p.87, that "From v.13 on, Jewish hatred of the gospel seems to come into consideration."
140. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.195, says v.18 "indicates the root of their evil deeds and also their evil words - in fact, the very essence of their ungodliness."
141. This view is contrary to that of Barrett, *op. cit.*, pp.68f, Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.191, Käsemann, p.81; ET, pp.85f, that Paul's purpose here is to prove that all men are ungodly. While by showing the Jews to be ungodly, he *has* shown this to be the case, his concern here, and in the continuing argument, seems to us to be to explain to the Jews their position, and the relationship between their covenant and the gospel, rather than to make universal declarations, even though he does make these in the service of his explanation. In view of the acknowledgement of these commentators that vv.19f sum up this passage, and yet see this conclusion as specifically relating to the Jews, their concern to bring in the Gentiles at this point is surprising. We also reject Käsemann's assertion, p.81; ET, p.85, that "Only from the perspective of the Jew as the representative of the religious person can universal godlessness be proclaimed." We see no basis in the text for making this generalizing statement. While it may well have been appropriate for Käsemann in his own situation to apply the same logic to those whom he considered to be 'religious persons', we see no sense in which he is right to attribute the same notion to Paul. On the same grounds we reject his view, which he bases on this understanding of vv.9-18, that vv.19f can also be generalized (*ibid.*) so that he asserts, p.82; ET, p.87, "the Jew as a representative of the pious person is the real opponent in the discussion." Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.71, tends to make the same generalization, for no apparent reason.
142. Käsemann, p.82; ET, p.87.
143. *Ibid.*, p.85; ET, p.89.
144. Likewise Barrett, *op. cit.*, pp.70f; Cranfield, *op. cit.*, pp.195-199.
145. Käsemann, p.82; ET, p.87.
146. *Ibid.*, p.84; ET, p.89.
147. Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.70.
148. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.198, however, sees no basis for understanding ἔργα νόμου in this way.
149. *Ibid.*, pp.198f.
150. Käsemann, pp.84f; ET, p.89.
151. See p.195 above.

152. Thus we do not accept Käsemann's assertion, p.82; ET, p.87, that, "the common phrase *οἶδαμεν ὅτι* here does not so much call to mind the doctrinal tradition of the community but emphatically stresses the conclusion of the argument.
153. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.137, does put 'But' in his translation, but makes no reference to it in his comments. Käsemann, p.80, likewise uses 'aber'. The RSV and Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.66, insert 'now' at this point.
154. P.196. See also Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.70; Cranfield, *op. cit.*, pp.195f; Käsemann, p.82; ET, p.87.
155. Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.70; Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.196.
156. Käsemann, p.82; ET, p.87.
157. Clearly, this list of what may be being silenced is speculative, as Paul does not actually indicate what charges may be brought against God by the ungodly world. We can only suppose that life under the power of sin was anything but pleasant, so that man would have a grudge against whatever god or gods were there to provide for his needs in response to whatever acts were thought to be required to please those gods. In this sense, we can see some basis for Käsemann's view, p.83; ET, pp.87f, that "religiosity most profoundly characterizes the nature of the world." We still do not accept, however, that the Jew was exemplary of this piety, since prior to the giving of the law, piety in relation to the law was, of course, impossible.
158. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p.197.
159. Likewise Barrett, *op. cit.*, p.70; Käsemann, p.83; ET, p.88.
160. P.141 above.
161. P.144 above.
162. P.145, 147 above.
163. See full discussion of Deutero-Isaiah, pp.147-151 above.
164. Full discussion pp.152-154 above.
165. Pp.155-159 above. Although these writings are probably confined to Judaism, it seems reasonable to apply *the principles* of the approach of the sect to the rest of Judaism, to our question of the approach of Judaism to the rest of the world.
166. Pp.159-165 above.
167. P.161 above.

168. *Käsemann*, p.82; ET, p.87, in support of his view that this assertion would have been unacceptable to the Jews, notes that Billerbeck offers no parallel. He then writes off as basically irrelevant the one related statement he mentions: "2 *Apoc. Bar.* 48:40 simply says that the Gentiles could have known their sins from the law which they arrogantly despise." In contrast, we would see this idea to be supportive of our interpretation both of v.19b and v.20b, though the passage itself, as translated by Charles, does not entirely harmonize with our view, or with Käsemann's paraphrase of it. Referring to God's coming judgement, the text says,

'Because each of the inhabitants of the earth
knew when he was transgressing.
But my law they knew not by reason of their pride.'

169. 1QS 10:23f.

170. Pp.152ff above.

171. P.146 above.

172. Though we note that in Ps 51, quoted in Rom 3:4, the notion that one's transgressions result from overall sinfulness does seem to be present, and would appear to parallel Paul's notion of being under the power of sin. Nevertheless, the idea that this sinfulness is due to the wrath of God does not seem to be recognized.

173. *Käsemann*, p.82; ET, p.87.

174. *Ibid.*, p.83; ET, p.88.

175. *Ibid.*

176. *Ibid.*, p.84; ET, p.89.

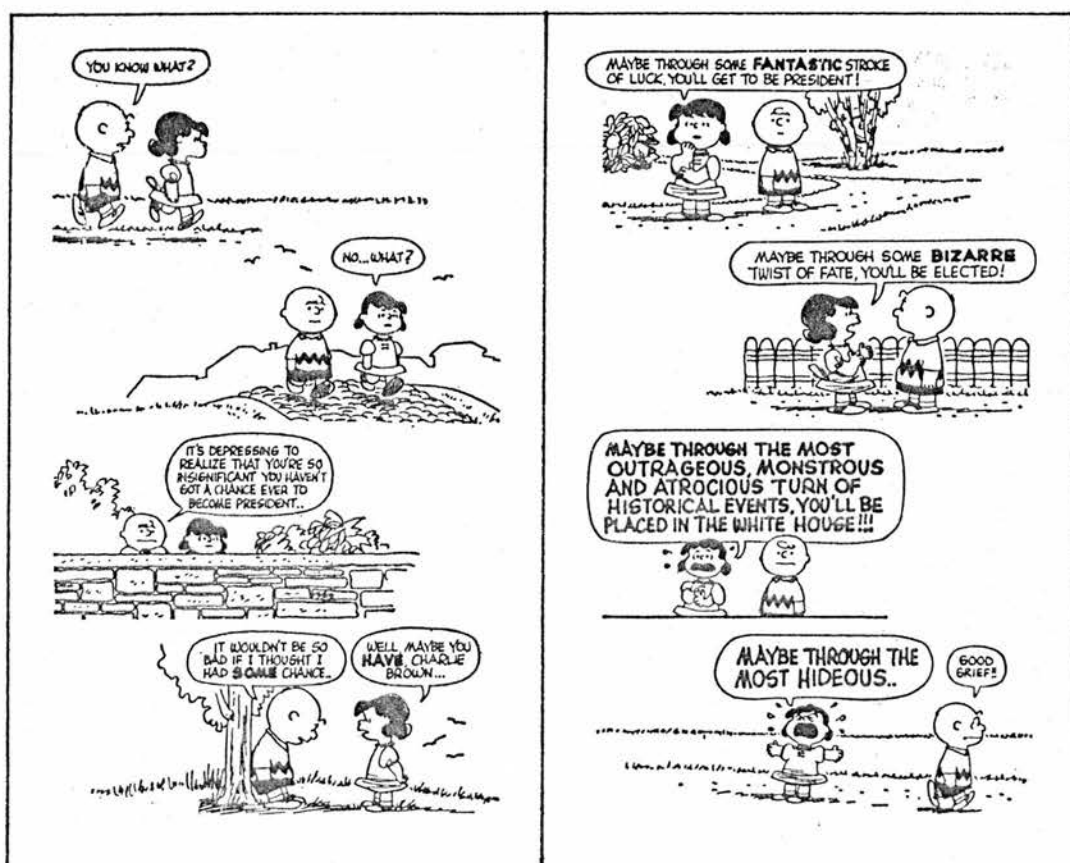
177. *Ibid.*, p.84; ET, p.88

Chapter 4

1. H. Birkeland, "The Belief in the Resurrection of the Dead in the Old Testament," *Studia Theologica*, 3(1,49), p.63; S.B. Frost, *Old Testament Apocalyptic: Its Origins and Growth* (London, 1952), p.26.
2. Frost, *ibid.*, p.27.
3. The same or similar expressions also occur in Gen 49:29,33; 50:12, 25:7; 35:29; 49:22,33; Num 20:24,26; Deut 32:50; Num 27:13; 31:2; Deut 32:50; Gen 15:15.
4. Frost, *op. cit.*,
5. W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*. trans. by J.A. Baker, Vol.2 (London, 1967) pp.212f.
6. Is 22:16; 2 Sam 17:23; 19:38; Gen 47:30; 50:25.
7. Frost, *op. cit.*, expresses the opinion that "It is hardly to be doubted that it is more prominent and less unchallenged in our documents than in the life of the nation at large, but it still remains true that it represents those elements in the nation which proved the enduring and vital strains." Perhaps in harmony with this is the comment in Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p.212, on the 'toughness' of the earlier belief.
8. G. von Rad. "ζάω κτλ.," *TWNT*, Vol.2 (1964), pp.846f. Nevertheless, there may have been some attempt by the religious leaders to suppress this belief. See p.209 above.
9. Eg., Gen 37:35; Num 16:30,33; 1 Sam 2:6; Job 7:9; 21:13; Ps 30:3; 86:13; Is 14:15. The idea is also conveyed by references to the depth of *sh'ol*, Ps 86:13; Is 7:11. In addition, Amos 9:2 speaks of digging into *sh'ol*. For a discussion of the supposed location of *sh'ol* see E.F. Sutcliffe, *The Old Testament and the Future Life* (London, 1946), pp.44f; N.J. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in The Old Testament* (Rome, 1969), pp.21-46.
10. Sutcliffe, *op. cit.*, p.36; Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p.210, note 2; X. Léon-Defour, *Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. by T. Prendergast (from 2nd French ed; London, 1950), p.370.
11. H.H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel: Aspects of Old Testament Thought* (London, 1956), p.158. Similarities and contrasts with Babylonian ideas of life after death are also postulated by Sutcliffe, *op. cit.*, p.20; Frost *op. cit.*, p.28; Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p.211; G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. by D.M.G. Stalker, Vol.1 (London, 1962), p. 406. Nevertheless, any significant infiltration of ideas from other near neighbours - Egyptians, Persians,

Canaanites - seems to be denied, cf., Sutcliffe, *op. cit.*; Rowley, *op. cit.*, pp.161-163, and regarded rather as opposing positions to be strenuously rejected; and thereby in effect working against development in Jewish perceptions. cf., Frost, *op. cit.*, Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p.222; Rowley, *op. cit.*, p.163; von Rad, "ζάω κτλ.," *TWNT* Vol.2, p.847.

12. *bôr*: Is 14:15; Ps 30:3; 88:6; Ezek 32:33; Lam 3:53-55. Also, those who die may be described as 'those who go down to the pit': Ps 28:1, 88:4; 143:7; Is 38:18; Ezek 26:20; 31:14, 16; 32:18,24,25,29,30; Prov 1:12.
shachath: Ezek 28:8; Jonah 2:6; Ps 103:4; Is 38:17; 51:14; Job 33:18,22,24, 28,30.
13. *choshek*: Ps 88:12; Job 17:13; 18:18.
machashakkîm: Ps 88:6; Lam 3:6; Ps 143:3; Wis 17:21.
14. *dûmah*: Ps 94:17; 115:17.
15. Ps 88:12 (This probably refers to God and the living forgetting the dead, rather than being a belief that the dead forget).
16. Ps 88:11; Job 26:6; 28:22; Prov 15:11;27:20.
17. For further names, and detailed discussion, see Tromp, *op. cit.*, pp.21-159.
18. Is 14:9; 26:14,19; Job 26:5; Ps 88:10; Prov 2:18; 9:18; 21:16.
19. Sutcliffe, *op. cit.*, p.20.
20. Léon-Dufour, *op. cit.*, p.159.
21. For fuller discussion, and biblical references to these and other descriptions of *sh'ol* see, Rowley, *op. cit.*, pp.158-160; Sutcliffe, *op. cit.*, pp.52-59; Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, pp.95f; Tromp, *op. cit.*, pp.176-210. On the reluctance to go down to *sh'ol* see Ps 17; 2 Sam 22; Jonah 2.



22. C.M. Schultz, *For the Love of Peanuts!* (London, 1969).
23. Ps 89:48; Job 30:23; Eccles 9:10; Prov 27:20; 30:15f.
24. Job 7:9; 14:7-12; 16:22; 10:21; 2 Sam 12:23; There are passages such as 1 Sam 2:6, which speak of Yahweh bringing men up from *sh'e'ol*, but it is generally agreed that these refer to rescue from what seemed to be the very point of death. As Sutcliffe, *op. cit.*, p.51, puts it, "[God] allows men to come into imminent danger of death, and then, if He sees fit, removes the danger and restores health and security. That this is the meaning and that there is no reference to raising men from the dead is clear from other texts where similar expressions are used by living men in thanksgiving to God for their own rescue from imminent danger." (Ps 30:3; 86:13; 88:3-7; Jonah 2:2; Hosea 13:14.)
25. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 1, p.390.
26. *Ibid.* See also C. Barth, *Die Erretung von Tode in den individuellen Klage- und Dankliedern des Alten Testaments* (Zollikon, 1947), p.69.
27. von Rad, *ibid.*, p.391, says, "death . . . comprised many possibilities of trial, but . . . it in no sense became the question which threatened the foundation of all faith. Certainly, it was conceived as a question directed to men much more than to God, for because of the concept of the fate-bringing act all disturbances of life and all illness had something of the

effect of arousing the men concerned. Thus suffering led along a very direct way to repentance and examination of one's relationship to God, in the disturbance of which one summarised its origin to lie. Men saw themselves as questioned through suffering."

28. Frost, *op. cit.*, p.27. The forbidding of necromancy, the cult of the dead (Lev 19:26; Dt 18:9ff; 1 Sam 15:23; 28:3; 2 Kings 17:17; 21:6) is evidence that the Israelites were attracted by other religious practices. The unacceptability of this is reflected in Is 8:9ff.
29. Frost, *op. cit.*, p.29.
30. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p.221.
31. Frost, *op. cit.*, p.28.
32. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*
33. Frost, *op. cit.*, p.29.
34. L.R. Bailey, *Biblical Perspectives on Death* (Philadelphia, 1979), pp.57-61; von Rad, "ζάω κτλ.," *TWNT*, Vol. 2, pp.847f.
35. Frost, *op. cit.* Sutcliffe, *op. cit.*, pp.29-36, demonstrates that the book of Ecclesiastics, written in the late 3rd or early 2nd century B.C., retains fundamentally the same belief in *sh'ol* that was held in the Pentateuch, an idea, as we have noted, which probably arose in the 8th century B.C.
36. This is the interpretation of Ps.139:8, 'If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there!' and Amos 9:2, 'Though they dig into Sheol, from there shall my hand take them' suggested by Rawley, *op. cit.*, p.160, and Sutcliffe, *op. cit.*, p.52, who adds Prov 15:11, 'Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the Lord' as further evidence to support his view that "this knowledge, this power, and this presence were known to extend even to the deep and hidden places of the earth, even to Sheol." Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, pp.221f, says of this point that the dead are cut off from relationship with Yahweh, "This is not to say that the realm of the dead is anywhere thought of as something independent of Yahweh, as so to speak standing under its own sovereign. Even if Amos 9:2 is the first explicit mention of Yahweh's power over Sheol, yet this could hardly have been doubted even before that time. There was simply no occasion to speak of it, since Yahweh himself did not bother about the dead."

In marked opposition to this view is that of von Rad, "ζάω κτλ.," *TWNT*, Vol.2, p.847, who says, "Yahweh is the God of life in a wholly exclusive sense. And the sharp antithesis to the view of Yahweh's relation to life is equally plain . . . Death and its kingdom are outside the stream of power which has subjected all the kingdoms of life to itself." From this

point of view, von Rad puts an entirely different weight on the above-mentioned passages: "only twice in the OT do we find exceptions to this established view. In Am. 9:2 and Ps 139:8 Sheol, too, is regarded as within Yahweh's sphere of influence. But these passages do not represent the common view. They are conclusions drawn from bold individual faith in the omnipotence of Yahweh." (Note 109). (This conclusion differs from that drawn previously by von Rad, in *Old Testament Theology*, Vol.1, p.389, where he sees Amos 9:2 and Ps 139:8 as indicating those in *shē'ol* are still under God's authority).

The radical difference between von Rad and Eichrodt in their interpretation of limited evidence demonstrates the weakness of both arguments, and especially the inconclusiveness of the textual references. Eichrodt's argument from silence is open to the criticism of all such arguments, namely that on the one hand the conclusion amounts to little more than speculation, while on the other hand the idea that a commonly held assumption would not crop up more frequently, for example in discussion of related issues, lacks conviction. Eichrodt might more appropriately have gone no further than to state that the evidence seems to suggest that on the whole the Israelites simply did not think about the question, so had no particular opinion about it. At the same time, von Rad can be criticised on the grounds that it is not unusual in biblical scholarship to draw general conclusions from equally scant evidence. In addition von Rad's attributing Ps 139:8 to individual faith would seem to be called into question by his own remark, criticizing Gunkel for perceiving "the personality and the individual experience of the poet" behind the psalms which should be recognized as being "moulded by cultic convention," that the "assessment of the part played by the poet as an individual must not be accepted uncritically" because "it leads to serious theological error . . . in statements concerning life and death." G. von Rad,, "Righteousness' and 'Life' in the Cultic Language of the Psalms, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. by E.W.T. Dicken (Edinburgh & London, 1966), p.243. It might have been more convincing if von Rad had rejected these passages as insignificant on the grounds that in both cases *shē'ol* seems to be being used metaphorically, to express removing oneself as far as possible from God, rather than necessarily indicating a particular view about the realm of the dead.

It may seem that this is an unduly long discussion of a relatively unimportant point. In the context of our interest in God as him who raises the dead, however, it is significant in that, if it is true that Yahweh has no influence in *shē'ol*, the very possibility of him raising the dead would seem to be precluded. At this stage, and in the light of the above, the only thing that can be said with certainty is that the evidence on its own is inconclusive. Ultimately, as with Eichrodt and von Rad, the option that most satisfactorily harmonises with the interpretation of related factors, will no doubt be the one favoured. In our own case, since we are committed to affirming that God is him who raises the dead, the option that supports

this view is the one we choose to put forward in our text, though it is, of course, still possible to argue for development of the idea, as von Rad does.

37. Sutcliffe, *op. cit.*, p.52.
38. See also Ps 115:17; 6:5; 28:1; 30:9; Is 38:10-20.
39. Similarly, in Ps 6:4f, the psalmists asks to be delivered *so that* he can continue to praise God.
40. See also 2 Chron 5:13; 31:2.
41. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol.1, p.389.
42. Frost, *op. cit.*, p.28.
43. Ps 104:30; Num 16:22; 27:16; Gen 25:27; Ezek 37:14; Job 10:12; 17:1; Gen 6:3; Ps 104:29; Job 34:14; Eccles 3:19,21; 12:7.
44. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p.48. See Ezek 2:2; 3:14; 11:5a; 37:1, 5f 8-10; Zech 12:1; Job 12:10.
45. *Ibid.*, p.49.
46. Pp.55, 64 above.
47. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, pp.50ff, describes the original evolution of this idea in considerable detail: "God's activity in history, aimed at the creation of a consecrated people of God, was discerned not only in isolated marvellous events, but also in emergence of specially equipped men and women whose leadership in word and deed, by wars of liberalisation without and by the establishment of the will of God in the social and moral order within, dragged the dull mass of the people with them, again and again smashing and sweeping away all the obstacles which the incursion of heathen morals and ways of thought raised against them. In the activity of these mediators and instruments of the divine covenant purpose of salvation the Israelite people recognised afresh the eruption of God's transcendent life into the paltry patchwork of this world; and they could find no way of grasping the astounding force which radiated from these leaders, and gave them the capacity for their task, than to designate it the living breath or spirit of God. . . . the most striking feature was the *mysterious nature of the divine life*. In the fact that at the mortal crises of the nation's history men hitherto completely unknown and unimportant, such as Gideon and Jephthah, could carry the dejected people with them to inspired military achievements: that the Nazarite Samson could display the strength of a giant: that a diffident youth like Saul could compel the people to accept his leadership, and decisively defeat the insolent king of the Ammonites, men acknowledged the bestowal of the divine life-giving power. They discerned it also in the ecstasy of the prophetic bands, when forgetful of self in the

praise of the God of Israel in song and dance all who took part were plunged in rapture, when the outward eye was closed in the night of unconsciousness and in its place an inner eye opened to behold the mysteries of the divine realm to make them known in oracles, when astonishing miraculous powers burst forth to heal the sick, to satisfy the hungry. and to recall the dead to life. Among other incidents ascribed to the miraculous power of the spirit were a sudden disappearance, a miraculous parting of the Jordan, and a startling dream-interpretation. The unifying factors behind all these varied phenomena were first, that in them men saw the radiance of a higher kind of life, translating Man into direct contact with the divine world, and secondly, that they all occurred in the service of the establishment of the kingdom of God in Israel. . . . in the heroic spirit and the prophetic alike the *rūah* is primarily nothing other than the supra-sensible casualty of the miraculous. This agrees with the fact that the power of the spirit emerges like a volcanic eruption, now here now there, sudden and unmediated, and then disappears again according as God calls his own particular deeds The spirit appears as an intermittent divine force, absolutely outside the control of Man, and suddenly overpowering him. It is, however, precisely because of this characteristic that in the face of such events men feel themselves confronted by the divine Lord, whose majesty evokes in Man not only bliss but also fear and trembling."

Eichrodt goes on to trace the development of this awareness of the action of God's life-giving breath through to the post-exilic period, by which time, he says, p.61, "the spirit is the medium through which God's presence in the midst of the people becomes a reality, and in which all the divine gifts and powers which work within that people are combined . . . the efficacy of the *rūah* . . . includes all the marvellous powers which have maintained the national life in the course of her history." It is also now looked to for guidance and protection in the present, so that '*greater and greater areas of life* are [brought] *within the scope of its domain*' (p.63), for the individual as well as the nation. "Here are the very definite beginnings of a systematic understanding of the *whole* of life as proceeding from the power of the spirit, the aim of which is to actualise the will of God in all the forms of human existence." (p.63)

48. Barth, *op. cit.*, pp.91ff and especially pp.124ff; Bailey, *op. cit.*, pp.40f.
49. See p.208 above.
50. Cf. Ps 36:9; 56:136.
51. This we surmise on the basis of the statement of 8:20b, 'Surely for this word they speak there is no dawn', since 'no dawn' implies no light, i.e., no life.
52. This wider understanding of death obviously precludes the continuance of the idea that the dead were physically located underground, and the notion

of death as some sort of power, comparable but opposed to the power of God's *rūah* begins to emerge.

53. Bailey, *op. cit.*, pp.39ff.
54. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol.1, p.387.
55. *Ibid.*, p.388.
56. *Ibid.*, pp.387f.
57. The BBC Television series, *Bagpuss*, and books such as A.A. Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh*; *The Velveteen Rabbit* and similar examples of the notion of a world of animated toys, although we contend that access to the idea is best found through the child's own description, or better, if the child invites one to 'visit' her world, and participate in the current activity. To participate is to experience this 'life' for oneself.
58. Examples of children's books which attempt to convey this sort of activity are J. Burningham, *Come away from the water, Shirley* (London, 1977) and *Time to get out of the bath, Shirley* (London, 1978); H. Edwards, *There's a Hippopotamus on our Roof Eating Cake* (Sydney, 1982).
59. Cf. p.215, note 47 above.
60. The whole of Rom 6-8 seems to depend on this underlying perception of life and death.
61. P.60 above.
62. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p.49.
63. 1 Sam 17:26; 2 Kings 19:4; Ps 36:9; 42:2; 104:29f; Job 34:14f; Jer 2:13; 17:13.
64. Dt 32:39; Num 27:16; Job 12:10.
65. Similar pronouncements are made in Lev 18:5; Ezek 18. Ezek 18 is distinctive in that it brings home the responsibility of the individual for his own fate *and* for the fate of the nation, and the ever new opportunity for change - the decision for or against God is not made once and for all, but must constantly be renewed if it is affirmative, and can always be reversed if it has been negative. Although it can be argued that Ezekiel demonstrates the growth of individualism, p.146 above, it must at the same time be stressed that his primary concern is the preservation of the nation, as we shall see in our discussion of Ezek 37, p.234 below.
66. P.58 above.
67. See Chapter 2, note 139.

68. Cf. p.217 above.

69. It is to be noted, however, that the numerous commandments, statutes and ordinances of the Torah are not as complex as might at first sight appear. Nor do they constitute a comprehensive judicial system such as is familiar in the modern Western world. The intention and content of the Torah goes much deeper than the sort of pedantic legalism that has been attributed to it, not least by interpreters of Romans. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. by J.A. Baker, Vol.1 (London, 1961) pp.93ff, elaborates this.

"The Deuteronomic lawgiver is marked off from all exponents of merely sentimental, utopian theories of the state by his clear awareness that the kind of national character he proclaims is not possible on the basis of some pragmatic rationalism, but must be the expression of a faith determined by the reality of the covenant God. Behind the state, as its own support and guarantee, stands the congregation. Nothing less than this is implied by his declaration that *the primary commandment is that of love for God*. This alone can point the way to a just observance of God's ordinances." (Dt 6:5; cf. 10:12; 11:13,22; 19:9; 30:16)

This means that the Torah is not legalistic, but is the preaching and/or teaching of religion. Thus, "each individual ruling is only to be understood rightly as the will of God, in so far as it is comprehended as the detailed expression of an overall injunction of love, by which God claims man for his own - not just in this particular obligation, but in man's whole personal being, 'with all his hearth and all his soul and all his strength'. "The law does not substitute external legalism for this self-giving. "On the contrary, it teaches that all these laws . . . are to be understood as the application and practice in particular concrete situations of the primary command of love; for it is in such situations that the Israelite is incorporated as a member of his people. The law is a practical guide for the man who wishes to set God up as the supreme director of his whole being."

The extensive listing of commandments does not, therefore, aim for the completeness, but aims to show by a wide variety of specific illustrations, the nature of the one over-riding commandment. The collection is given as "the unfolding with the help of examples of what it means to behave in accordance with the righteous fear of God. Moreover, any legalistic misunderstanding of the command to love God is countered by the great stress laid on the demonstration of God's love for man. Loving before there was any human action in response, this love chose the people for God's own possession and gave them the law as token of their special position of favour. To obey the law thus becomes man's response of love to the divine act of election." (Dt 4:5-8,37); 7:6ff; 10:14ff; 23:6). Legal terminology is used "to drive home this basic claim of God which is *greater than all law*." (Our emphasis)

The same can be said for the range of commandments governing inter-human relationships. All relate to the one definitive directive to love one's neighbour as oneself, "a maxim which jettisons the idea of law as a rigid definition of the limits of social relations and assigns it instead the role of a guide, giving detailed, concrete directions for a far higher level of moral life, removing from the exclusive domination of man's lust for power and egoistic self-interest all those matters with which the law is concerned and infusing them with its own spirit."

70. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p.500.
71. *Ibid.*, pp.503f.
72. von Rad, "'Righteousness' and 'Life' in the Cultic Language of the Psalms," p.253.
73. *Ibid.*, p.254.
74. *Ibid.*, 250.
75. *Ibid.*, 253.
76. P.31 above.
77. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol.2, p.497f.
78. Cf. Is 49:14.
79. 40:6-7,13; 42:5; 45:7; 50:4; 51:12f,16.
80. 40:20; 41:7, 28f; 44:19f; 45:20; 46:7; 47:13ff.
81. 41:11f; 42:17; 44:9ff; 45:1-3,76; 47 where shame, dust, disaster, ruin, silence, dankness, nakedness can all be taken as synonymous for death.
82. 42:7,22; 49:9; 51:20.
83. 41:17-20; 43:19f; 44:3; 49:9f; 51:3; 55:1f,12f; Cf., 44:12.
84. 40:29-31; 41:1,10,13-16; 44:2; 45:2; 45:24; 50:4,7; 51:9.
85. 40:11; 46:3f; 48:18f (Cf. Chapter 3, note 27); 51:3,12,14.
86. 43:5; 44:3; 49:19-21; 51:2; 54:1-4.
87. 41:8; 43:16f *et passim*. See note 47 above.
88. Cf. p.222 above.
89. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol.2, pp.507f.
90. Cf. Chapter 2, note 1.

91. Käsemann, p.117; ET, p.123.
92. 1 Kings 17:17ff; 2 Kings 4:18ff; 13:20f.
93. Gen 5:21-24; 2 Kings 2:9-12.
94. von Rad, "‘Righteousness’ and ‘Life’ in the Cultic Language of the Psalms", pp.260ff.
95. *Ibid.*, p.259.
96. Other references to the contradiction that the righteous frequently did not prosper in everyday life, whereas often the wicked did, even at the expense of the righteous, include Ps 37;49:7ff; 92:8f; Job 21:7.
97. *Ibid.*, p.264. The farthest von Rad is prepared to go is to conclude that "One can at least say with considerable confidence that the *Psalter* reveals the existence within the post-exilic community of a group of spiritually alert Levites, who interpreted the promise of Yahweh’s gift of life in a sense which is wholly sublime." (p.266). Anderson, cited below, seems prepared to take this further, both in relating it to resurrection and in applying it more broadly. This latter seems reasonable, unless the psalms were confined in their use to the particular group from whom they came. At the opposite extreme, Birkeland, *op. cit.*, pp.70f postulates that these psalms refer to only very special persons, "a king, a High Priest, a prophet, a great chieftain and the like."
98. R. Anderson, "The Old Testament and the Resurrection of Christ," *The Heart of the Matter*, ed. by N. Watson (Melbourne, 1980), pp.22f.
99. *Ibid.*, p.23. On the question of foreign influence, considerable weight is given this by A. Bertholet, "The Pre- Christian Belief in the Resurrection of the Body," *American Journal of Theology*, 20 (1,16), pp.1-30; Frost, *op. cit.*, p.30; whereas it is very much minimised by O. Cullmann, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead? The Witness of the New Testament* (London, 1958); A.D. Nock, "A Note on the Resurrection." Rowley, *op. cit.*, pp.161ff.
100. Rowley, *op. cit.*, p.175
101. This parallels our interpretation of Romans that the primary problem for the Jews was that inclusion of the Gentiles, the unrighteous, seemed to call God’s faithfulness to his people into question. Paul’s answer, in Barth’s words is that "[God] justifies us in order to justify himself." (K. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. by E.C. Hoskyns (6th ed.; London, 1933), p.41.
102. Job 7:9; 10:21; 14:1f,7-14; 16:22

103. Seemingly Job as not prepared to accept the spirit of wisdom that Odgen Nash, *I Wouldn't Have Missed It: Selected Poems*, (London, 1983), p.338, presents in this poem!

A child need not be very clever
To know that "Later dear" means "Never".

104. Rowley, *op. cit.*, p.165. Cf. Anderson, cited above p.231.
105. Bertholet, *op. cit.*, p.22. Cf. Birkeland, *op. cit.*, p.69, makes the observation that "an opposition always implies the *notion* of the idea opposed."
106. Cf. the use of "Sheol" in Ps 139:8, Amos 9:2. See our comment in the latter part of note 36 above.
107. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol.2, p.507, sees Ezek 37 as conveying a significant lesson to the Israelite people: "God's faithfulness to his plan of salvation, which faith had hitherto steadfastly maintained in the face of doom of death, is not imperilled even if he abandons his people to suffering and death, because he is the God of wonders, who executes judgement, the God who can recall to life even from the tomb. But faith in this faithfulness must also pass through this crisis of death in order that its confidence may be placed uniquely and alone in the miraculous living power of its God, and that it may cost no more sidelong, yearning glances at earthly security. Only in this way can it fully comprehend the rich content of God's offer of life in the covenant making." Cf. Is 53.
108. Rowley, *op. cit.*, p.164.
109. Anderson, *of. cit.*, p.21, says, "Whatever other interpretation might be placed on these words, there would be the common agreement that to be the word of God they must speak naturally and clearly to those to whom they were addressed. To claim otherwise is to suggest that the Bible, or parts of it at least, is some kind of divine, cryptic crossword with given clues but hidden solutions.
- "Notwithstanding the helpful comment of Dom Hubert Zeller that 'more has gone into the scriptures than man will ever take out of them', we must look first at how the words of such biblical passages as our text first sounded to those who initially heard them and . . . to those who initially and subsequently used them."
110. J.F.A. Sawyer, "Hebrew Words for the Resurrection of the Dead," *Vetus Testamentum*, 23(2,73), 218-234.
111. *Ibid.*, p.234, Referring to Is 26:19, Sawyer says, "there is no good reason for denying that originally, that is, in the original context of the final form of the Book of Isaiah, this passage referred to the resurrection of the servant from his grave with a rich man . . . it is . . . a beautiful illustration of

how lexical and theological developments in the context of a passage, can add a new dimension to its meaning, a dimension which we need no longer feel it is unscientific to describe, or indeed translate, as it stands

"An Old Testament theology based on the final form of the text of the Old Testament would undoubtedly diverge at many points from existing theologies, but it would certainly be extremely interesting."

112. *Ibid.*, p.230.

113. Lest some ambiguity remains, we here repeat our conclusion with the aid of the precision of mathematical language, in order to emphasise the strength of this assertion, and to counter any tendency cautiously to qualify or weaken it:

Let $C = \{\text{those created out of nothing}\}$
 and $J = \{\text{those ungodly justified}\}$
 and $R = \{\text{those raised from the dead}\}$
 Then $C \equiv J \equiv R$
 $\Rightarrow C \cup J \cup R = C = J = R$
 $\Rightarrow C \cap J \cap R = C = J = R$

114. P.141 *et passim*.

115. Cf. Deutero-Isaiah, and our discussion thereof: pp.63ff, 147ff, 225ff, above.

116. Frost, *op. cit.*, p.159 describes Is 26:14-19 as a parody of Is 54:1-5.

117. Cf. Deutero-Isaiah, where, presumably in response to increased awareness of the humanity of the enemy we find a more positive attitude, that even looks forward to all nations coming to enjoy the fullness of life under Yahweh that previously was thought to be for Israel alone. See Frost, *op. cit.*, p.10.

118. See note 36 above.

119. There is a certain contradiction here, in relation to the writing as a whole, in that it suggests favoured treatment for Gentiles too, or for at least some of them. However, it is clear that at least the enemies of the nation will be destroyed. This may reflect again some ambiguity or vagueness in the formulation of the faith, or may represent the bringing together of two different writings on the subject of the afterlife.

120. See note 111 above.

121. Frost *op. cit.*, p.154.

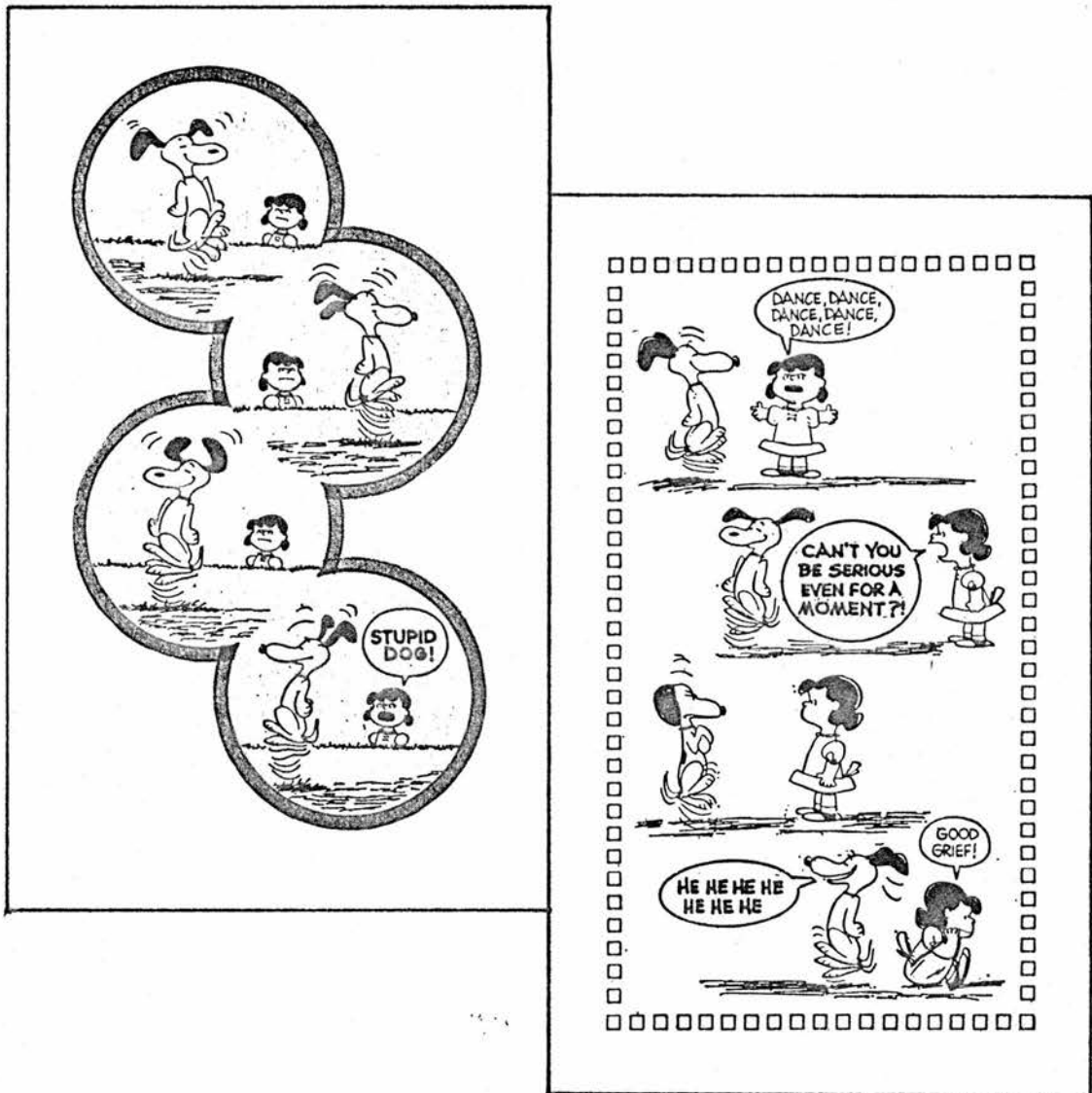
122. Pp. 151-154 above.

123. P.152.

124. P.154.
125. P.69.
126. It may be that Dan 12:2-3 is dependent on the thoughts in Is 26-19; 66:24 and especially 52:13-53. Cf. H.C.C. Cavallin, *Life After Death*, Part 1 (Uppsala, 1974), pp.26f, 210f. Alternatively, both writers may be reflecting ideas already becoming current in some circles.
127. Sutcliffe, *op. cit.*, p.160, referring to Jewish intertestamental writings about after-life, says "Some of them are characterised by a vagueness of expression that betrays a vagueness of thought and shows that on certain questions ideas were fluid and indefinite." G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (Cambridge, 1972), p.180, states, "The evidence indicates that in the intertestamental period there was no single orthodoxy on the time, mode, and place of resurrection, immortality and eternal life."
128. For references to these ideas in the sources, see chapter 2, notes 72-77.
129. Cavallin, *op. cit.*, p.199.
130. *Ibid.*, pp.199f. Cavallin's interpretation of the variety and ambiguity as reflecting relative disinterest in such details compared with the significance of the underlying convictions about man and God, is surely a much more reasonable explanation than that of Frost, *op. cit.*, p.229, who says, "It means that the great apocalyptic ideas of an *eschaton*, of a Resurrection, and of an Age to Come, are now so much a part of the presuppositions of at least a section of the Jewish people, that they can afford to be vague and unreflective in these matters. They have become familiar ideas of unquestioned acceptance."
131. Cullman, *op. cit.*, though specifically comparing Socrates and Jesus, rather than referring to the intertestamental literature, nevertheless seems to attribute the notion of bodily resurrection to Judaism, contrasting this strongly with immortality which he attributes exclusively to Greek thought. A. Oepke, "ἐγείρω κτλ.," *TDNT*, Vol.2 (1964), p.337 refers to the imperialistic nature of Jewish hope. R. Bultmann, "ζάω κτλ.," *TDNT*, Vol.2 (1964), p.857, acknowledges "certain tendencies towards the emphasising of the other-worldly aspect of eschatological life" in Palestinian Judaism, but nevertheless says of Hellenistic Judaism, p.859, "The Palestinian idea of resurrection is only partly adopted by Hell. Judaism. It is usually replaced by the idea of the immortality of the soul—a result of the influence of dualistic Hellenistic anthropology. In this connection the older idea of *sheol* is abandoned in favour of a retribution which follows immediately at death." This suggests a greater dichotomy than Cavallin finds in his detailed study of the question.

132. Cavallin, *op. cit.*, p.200. Nickelsburg, *op. cit.*, also finds a range of views which are not especially confined to either Hellenistic or Palestinian Judaism, on which basis he refutes Cullmann's argument in some detail (pp.177-180).
133. Cavallin, *op. cit.*, p.201, Nickelsburg, *op. cit.*, pp.170-176.
134. Cavallin, *op. cit.*,
135. 2 Macc 7:6,9,11,14. Complete confidence is expressed in v.9, firm hope of bodily resurrection in v.11, hope that the righteous dead would be raised along with belief that the evil would suffer punishment on earth in v.14, and unspecified confidence in God's compassion on his people, which, against the background of certain death must refer to compassionate treatment after death. On the other hand, v.17 seems to hold hope for the continuance of Israel on earth, and presumably its renewal once God's righteous punishment on Israel being carried out through Antiochus, comes to an end and the oppressors are brought down by God, despite the suggestion that at present they are acting as God's instruments (vv.16f, 18f).
136. See p.68 above.
137. See P.144 above. Cf. Rom 3:3f.
138. It is interesting that in his speech to Antiochus, this youngest brother makes no confident assertion of a belief in his *own* resurrection. Although, presumably, he hoped for the same treatment he assumed his brothers to have received, he speaks only of giving up 'body and life' (2 Macc 7:36f).
139. In Chapter 3, p.139, we referred to Westermann's argument for dating Gen 15:1-6 in the period immediately preceding the exile, so clearly before the development of any notion of an after-life.
140. P.139 above. For more detailed discussion see Bailey, *op. cit.*, pp.49ff; Martin-Achard, *op. cit.*, pp.21ff. The expectation of life after death made this aspect of the desire for children less critical. According to Wis 3:10-4:6 it is of far greater value to be righteous and have no descendants than to have numerous descendants but be ungodly. Thus a barren woman (3:13), a eunuch (3:14) or someone who is childless (4:1) can find real hope through faithfulness, obedience or virtue, whereas 'the prolific brood of the ungodly will be of no use' (4:3).
141. Pp.65, 67, 149.
142. Pp.69, 152f.
143. P.67.
144. Pp.65f.

145. P.67. Cf. Rom 3:29f.
146. See Chapter 3, note 64 above.
147. Pp.67, 70.
148. The idea that a dreadful death might attract rather than discourage is at first sight rather strange. The way this might work is illustrated, albeit in a somewhat trivial way, by the following series of cartoons by C.M. Schulz, *Here Comes Charlie Brown* (London, 1970). The suggestion is that perseverance, despite sustained criticism, scorn and threats can win over even the most sceptical observer.





149. An example of this is the account of Razis, 2 Macc 14:37-46, who commits suicide rather than deliver himself into the hands of the oppressors.
150. But cf. our conclusion drawn from 2 Macc 7, p.246. It should be said, however, that although we found reference there to justification of the ungodly, we do not assume that those involved would have so described it.
151. Pp.72-75.
152. Pp.155-159.
153. Nickelsburg, *op. cit.*, p.194, draws attention to the "wide variety of conflicting conclusions" on this subject drawn by commentators. Nonetheless,

we agree with his conclusion that "The published scrolls of Qumran are remarkable in that they contain not a single passage that can be interpreted with absolute certainty as a reference to resurrection or immortality." Nickelsburg, p.166, attributed this to the fact that the Essenes did not have to deal with the problems which gave rise in other writings to belief in life after death, in particular oppression and persecution to the death. This is consistent with our interpretation. At the same time, we are of the opinion that our remarks go even further towards explaining this silence on the subject. By setting up a community consisting exclusively of members committed to total obedience to the law and believing themselves to enjoy close fellowship with God, even the issues which gave rise to the earliest faint movement towards a belief in resurrection, as expressed in some of the psalms, are eliminated, especially in view of the assumption that there would be no end to life for the members. As in Psalms 16 and 49, confidence that fellowship with God will continue unbroken makes it unnecessary to speculate on the mechanics of how this might come about. It also does away with concern over the prosperity of the wicked because the very existence of the community indicates the members' acceptance of the perspective on this problem that provided the solution for the writer of Ps 73.

154. Bailey, *op. cit.*, p.85, remarks, "Continuity between eternal life now and in the future is so certain that there is no need to dwell on physical death: it is inconsequential."
155. As in preceding chapters, we have limited our discussion to the Psalms.
156. 1QH 4:5f, 23; 7:2, 26:9:27; 18:29.
157. 1QH 4:27.
158. 1QH 4:23; 12:26.
159. 1QH 7:25; 9:26-29; 18:29f.
160. 1QH 1:21; 18:19,27. 18:27 emphasizes the initial state of death with the double image, "an ear of dust".
161. 1QH 8:4-14; 12:13; 12:28f.
162. 1QH 2:7f; 7:6f; 4:36; 2:31; 3:19-28; 5:6.
163. 1QH 13:8,11-14; 12:11-13; 11:27; 14:25f; 12:19f,29.
164. This assertion is qualified by the fact that, in most cases, justification is taken to be for the righteous rather than the ungodly. In the course of our discussion of Romans, however, we will argue that the parallelism carries more weight than the assertion of righteousness. The cultic declaration of righteousness tends to disguise the actual underlying theological conviction, which is that God justifies the ungodly.

165. G. Bertram "ζάω κτλ.," *TDNT* Vol.2 (1964), p.852. Similarly, Martin-Achard, *op. cit.*, p.224.
166. Sawyer, *op. cit.*, p.227.
167. E.g., Ecclesiasticus, Judith, Tobit, Baruch, 1 Maccabees.
168. Cavallin, *op. cit.*, p.146.
169. *Ibid.*, p.194.
170. Martin-Achard, *op. cit.*
171. Josephus, Jewish War II viii 14; Ant. 18:4; Mk 12:18; Acts 4:2; 23:8.
172. Cavallin *op. cit.*, p.144.
173. R.A. Stewart, *Rabbinic Theology* (Edinburgh & London, 1961) p.146.
174. *Ibid.*, pp.145ff. (Gehenna, an underground place of punishment created by God replaced Sheol in Rabbinic writings, *ibid.*, pp.157-160).
175. "The following have no portion in the world to come: He who says that the Torah is not from Heaven, or that the resurrection of the dead is not taught in the Torah" (A Zar 18a. Likewise Sanh 11:1).
176. H. Belloc, *Cautionary Verses* (Album Edition; London 1040), pp.247f. Cf Sanh 90b.
177. Sawyer, *op. cit.*, pp.218-234. For a more extended list of relevant vocabulary, see pp.221ff.
178. Cited in Stewart, *op. cit.*, p.184.
179. Stewart, *op. cit.*, p.155.
180. *Ibid.*, pp.155-157; Sanh 91a.
181. Käsemann, p.3: ET, p.5, mentions that the name 'Christ Jesus' also had Messianic significance, at least originally.
182. See also Deut 4:6; 33:29.
183. Is 40:5, 42: 43:8ff; 45:5-7; 49:6f; 52:10,15; 55:5.
184. Deut 29:29.
185. Is 41:4; 42:8; 43:11,13; 44:6ff; 45:5,21ff; 46:9, cf. 41:28f; 46:7b.
186. Is 45:14f; 49:23,26.
187. Is 42:10-13; 43:10ff; 44:8; 48:20.

188. Is 42:6f.
189. Ps 48:4ff; 64:9; 102:15.
190. Ps 83:16ff; 109:27ff.
191. Ps 2:10f; 22:27ff; 46:10; 47:8f; 48:10; 49:1; 50:1; 57:5,,11; 66:1-9; 68:32ff; 72:18f; 97:1-7.
192. Ps 18:19; 57:9; 96; 145:10-13,21.
193. Ps 67:98.
194. Ps 80:6; 79:9f; 115:1f; 98:2f. Cf. the ineffectiveness of other gods, Ps 82:6f; 96:5.
195. See Chapter 2, note 1.
196. Cf. p.80
197. Cf. p.169
198. p.170 above.
199. C.Westermann, *Creation*, trans. by J.J. Scullion (London, 1974), p.91.
200. Käsemann, p.3; ET, p.5.
201. P.41 above.
202. Paraphrase and quotations from A.A. Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh* (66th reprint; London, 1977), pp. 42-53.

Chapter 5

1. This does not necessarily mean that every statement Paul makes is consistent with every other statement. On the contrary, his idea of how this particular God may address any specific situation must depend on that situation. In cases where priorities are out of balance, as seems to be so in much that Paul concerns himself with, he could be led to make statements which, placed alongside others addressing an opposite imbalance, would appear to be in direct contradiction. This, however, would not affect the affirmation that each of the statements was consistent with Paul's view of God, as would be apparent once the contexts of the statements were taken into account.
2. Obviously Paul's view differs from those of other Jewish writers in that his gospel of the revelation of God as him who justifies the ungodly is founded on his understanding of the person and purpose of Christ. Nevertheless, the earlier disciples' proclamation of the resurrection must surely have been perceived to be fundamentally a message about justification. Although it may not have been put in these terms, it is hard to image how any sense could be made of a declaration that Christ was raised from the dead unless the significance of resurrection could be assumed to be understood.
3. See pp.35ff.
4. To distinguish between the two senses: when the reference is to the quality of existence as determined by the relationship between those concerned and God, i.e., the sense designated 'metaphorical', this is indicated by means of the changed typeface: *creature*, *righteousness*, *life*.
5. Although the apocalyptic writers spoke predominantly of the resurrection of the righteous, this was clearly a reference to their being members of the Israelite nation, created as a righteous nation, i.e., in what we have designated the 'actual' sense, rather than necessarily in the eyes of other men, i.e., in the 'metaphorical' sense *righteous*. Since their claim to be *righteous* depended on God forgiving their transgressions against the law, in terms of their quality of life without or prior to forgiveness, they were *ungodly*. Paul points this out in the early chapters of Romans, in particular by citing the Old Testament in 3:10-18. This distinction between being God's created nation and being truly *righteous* is fundamental to Paul's argument.
6. Although Sanders has been strongly criticised for largely pre-determining his results by the structure he imposes on religion, it seems to us that it is appropriate to criticise him on his own terms, so in the ensuing discussion the pattern of getting in and staying in are simply adopted. It will be seen that it is possible to demonstrate the weaknesses of those of Sanders' arguments which have direct bearing on our study without entering into

criticism of his methodology. In our view Sanders blatantly distorts the Pauline text in some of his assertions. For example he says justification is equated with reconciliation, or sanctification, or being set free from sin. Our reading of Romans is that Paul attributes all these things to the fact that his hearers are justified by faith. Rom 5 begins by declaring 'since we are justified by faith we have peace with God'. He then goes on to speak of Christ dying for the ungodly so that believers would be justified, and only then substitutes 'reconciliation' in an equivalent statement. The argument about being dead to sin also follows from the declaration of righteousness 5:21, and sanctification is quite clearly a consequence of submitting to the power of righteousness, the gift of present salvation as justification, rather than submitting to the power of sin 6:19.

Appendix

1. This study unfortunately appeared too late to be taken into account in the main body of our investigation.
2. E. Käsemann, "Justice for the Unjust", *Colloquium* 11 (1,78), 10: "this formula . . . reflects the apostles' theology as a whole".
3. *PP*, p.131; *ET*, p.74: "the justification of the sinner is the centre, not only of the Pauline message but of the whole Christian proclamation".
4. *Ibid.*, p.165; *ET*, p.94: "This eternally faithful God had always brought about and had always intended the justification of the ungodly." *EVB* 2, pp.287f; *NTQT*, p.282: "The central message of the Bible is that God deals always, indeed exclusively, with the godless, because before him no man is pious and just."
5. *PP*, pp.237-285; *ET*, pp.138-166.
6. *Ibid.*, p.238; *ET*, p.138.
7. *Ibid.*, p.238; *ET*, p.139.
8. This point assumes the equivalence of the themes of justification, resurrection and creation which has been a primary concern of our study. Cf. pp.276ff, et passim.
9. Ehler, *Die Herrschaft des Gekreuzigten* (New York & Berlin, 1986), p.268.
10. Cf. our similar argument against Stendahl, p.297 above.

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